

**The Confession of the Missouri Synod
and the
Desired Unity of the Lutheran Church**

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CONTENTS

Chapter I	Of the Inerrancy of the Scriptures
Chapter II	Of Conversion
Chapter III	Of Objective Justification
Chapter IV	Of the Church
Chapter V	Of the Spiritual Priesthood and the Public Ministry
Chapter VI	Of Church Government
Chapter VII	Of Election or Predestination
Chapter VIII	Of the Shorter Theses
	Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

At the thirty-fifth regular convention of the Missouri Synod held at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in June, 1932, the "Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod," drawn up by a committee consisting of Dr. F. Pieper, Professor F. Wenger, Dr. E. A. Mayer, Dr. Th. Engelder, and Rev. L. August Heerboth, was officially adopted by the Missouri Synod as its own confession. Time and again our official publications have declared that these theses were to be regarded as a means in furthering a better understanding among the various Lutheran church bodies of this country and might serve as a basis in establishing a true unity of faith and doctrine in the Lutheran Church of America. Now the question arises, Are the contents of these theses and their wording such as to guarantee a true unity in case they are accepted by the other synods, which have so far been separated from us? And since the American Lutheran Church would be the first church body to come into consideration in the proposed union, the question arises, Is the doctrinal position and the attitude of that Church body such as to warrant any hope for a final understanding and union on the basis of this confession?

The following articles are to deal with these questions. Their aim is not to offer a commentary on these theses, nor to discuss all the points of doctrine contained in them. They are merely to set forth such features as have any bearing on the possible union of the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod and to compare the above-mentioned theses with utterances of men from the "other" side, which may throw some light on the situation as it exists today.

Twenty-five or thirty years ago these theses would not have passed without a severe criticism and accusation on the part of the former Ohio and Iowa Synods; for they contain statements, which were at that period regarded as Calvinistic leaven, not to mention those

other differences concerning the doctrine of the Church, Chiliasm, Anti-Christ, etc. However, as far as we were able to observe, no charge of false doctrine has ever been made against these theses in the publications of the various synods. This might be construed as a good symptom, but a remark found in the "Kirchliche Zeitschrift," August, 1932, shows that such a view is unfounded optimism. In that paper Dr. Reu mentioned the official ratification of these theses by the Missouri Synod and added, "There with the work of the Intersynodical Committee is buried." Buried, that means—if it means anything—that the acceptance of this confession on the part of Missouri definitely rendered all endeavors towards a final understanding and union between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod futile.

This sweeping statement may be a great surprise to many. Did not a mutual understanding seem very near only a few years ago? Has not the completion of the Intersynodical Theses proven that it was after all possible to bridge the gulf that had separated us? Is there really such a marked difference between the Intersynodical Theses and the "Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod," that the former might be regarded as paving the way for a final union and that the latter must be regarded as utterly destroying all hope for unity?

Dr. Reu's statement clearly shows that in his eyes there is such a marked difference between these two sets of theses. It will therefore be our task to thoroughly acquaint ourselves with the differences that still exist, so that we may be able to properly grasp the present situation as it really confronts us. In our discussion we shall not follow the historical order of the differences, nor that of the Intersynodical Theses, but the sequence of the "Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod."

CHAPTER I.

Of the Inerrancy of the Scriptures

There is no material difference between the "Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod" (which for brevity's sake we shall henceforth call the "St. Louis Theses") and the so-called Intersynodical or Chicago Theses as to the verbal inspiration and the inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures. Yet the former go a step further in this, that they stress this doctrine of the Inspiration and Inerrancy of Scripture as being strictly Scriptural and emphatically reject the idea, which of late years has gained ground within the former Iowa Synod, as though we were here merely dealing with a "theological deduction". This modern heresy, that the Scriptures contained, or at least might contain, errors, is strongly condemned in the St. Louis Theses as blasphemous and as overthrowing the very foundation of the Christian Church and its faith.

The doctrine of the Inspiration and the Inerrancy of the Scriptures has never been in dispute between the synods of Missouri and Ohio. Not to mention earlier testimonies, the "Pastor's Monthly" 1926-28 brought several articles which defended the plenary or verbal inspiration of the Bible against modern attacks and extolled the Scripture as an absolutely reliable source even in scientific questions. In a presidential message, published in that periodical January, 1928, we read, "On that question of the inerrancy of the Scriptures as given by God through the inspired writers, our Districts throughout the land have spoken in no uncertain terms. Not only have they expressed their convictions on the inerrancy of the original writings of the Scriptures; they have also registered their insistence that, whatever may or may not come of the cherished plans to unite our forces in organic union with those of other Lutheran bodies, the confession of faith of the prospective resultant body must clearly state our position on the inerrancy of God's holy Word".

There was a time when the former Iowa Synod was also unanimous in con-

fessing this truth. Professor F. A. Schmidt decidedly overstepped the mark, when in 1876 in discussing the shortcomings of the Iowa Synod, he accused the latter of treating the doctrine of Inspiration as an open question. There was really no occasion for such reproof. On the contrary, at that time the Iowa Synod not only unmistakably confessed the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures, but also rejected the denial of this doctrine as an un-Christian and divisive error. "The doctrine of Inspiration is certainly not a distinctive doctrine of the Lutheran Church but a doctrine universally accepted by Christians. Where it is denied, the question is not whether such a one may be regarded as a Lutheran, for he cannot even be considered a Christian. When it is a question of granting church fellowship, it is at once self-evident, that he, to whom it is to be granted, must not be a non-Christian but must with all Christendom accept the Word of God in all its parts and parcels as the infallible truth." (Iowa and Missouri, 1st Edit. p. 172). In this good confession there is not even a shadow of ambiguity.

But as the years rolled on, the Iowa Synod kept in close touch with the German theology of the nineteenth century, and in time this leaven worked. The gradual decline, even among positive theologians, their shifting more and more towards the modernistic conceptions of Scripture and theology, could not help but influence some of the leaders of the Iowa Synod to a certain degree. In the "Kirchliche Zeitschrift", August, 1926, Dr. Reu wrote an article on the "Peculiarity of the American Lutheran Church and Theology" in which the following passage caused an unpleasant surprise.

"The question is the inerrancy of the Holy Scripture in such things as have no bearing on the saving truth, the Christian faith and life. There is one class, which seems to assert that the inerrancy of the Scriptures refers only to

those things which pertain to the saving truth and therefore, from the start admit a possibility or probability that the Scriptures might err in other things. A second class, however, professes the absolute inerrancy of Scripture in all things, so that they are not even willing to grant church fellowship to those who here or there admit the possibility of an error in Scripture in minor things or claim an error in this or that point. A third class, while rejecting with the second class that it is wrong and dangerous to set up a theory which admits the errancy of Scripture in some things, and while they themselves profess the absolute inerrancy, be it of the present form of the Scriptures or at least of the original writings, to be an established fact; yet to those others, who evidently accept Gods infallible Word and as a matter of course submit to every thing which the Scriptures directly or indirectly say concerning faith and life, they are not ready to deny church fellowship because in certain instances they admit errors as possible in things which unquestionably do not pertain to our salvation."

The attitude, which Dr. Reu characterized as that of the third class, was exactly that of the Iowa Synod at that time. While they bitterly, yet justly, resented the false accusation in 1872, as though they regarded the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the whole Bible to be an open question, later-on they treated the denial of the inerrancy of the Scriptures in all things as a difference not important enough to refuse churchfellowship as long as the inerrancy of the Scripture in matters of faith and Christian life was acknowledged. As a matter of fact the Iowa Synod has for many years practiced church fellowship with German churches in which the inerrancy of the Scriptures was denied.

During the years 1926-30 this difficulty, i. e. the attitude of the Iowa Synod in the question of the inerrancy of the Scriptures was the stumbling block on which the planned union of the former Ohio, Iowa, and Buffalo Synods came very close to being wrecked. The Joint

Merger Commission had adopted and recommended a Confession of Faith in which the inerrancy of the whole Scripture was plainly stated: "The synod accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired and inerrant Word of God, and the only source, norm, and guide of faith and life." The representatives of the Iowa Synod in 1926 insisted that this paragraph be changed so as to restrict the inerrancy of the Bible to matters of Christian faith and life, leaving open the question of its inerrancy in minor matters.

For the space of several years this difference was the cause of a heated controversy not only among the representatives of the Ohio and Iowa Synods but also within the Iowa Synod itself, for the Iowa Synod had not yet adjusted itself to the change which unperceived had taken place within its midst. At the convention of the Iowa Synod at Waverly, 1928, the confession of Dr. S. Fritschel to the Holy Scripture as the inspired Word of God and therefore inerrant in all things was renewed. But at the same time the Report of this session is full of official utterances which decidedly favor the position of Dr. Reu, treating the matter as an open question. The inerrancy of the Scriptures in minor matters is not characterized as a plain Bible doctrine but as a deduction (p. 183), an exegetical question not yet solved (p. 184). The synod was warned, that an unconditioned confession of the inerrancy of the Bible as a Scriptural doctrine would endanger their church fellowship with other bodies, which do not accept this doctrine (p. 180) and might even alter the original attitude of the synod, according to which it never represented a certain theological school (p. 182).

In all these statements the inerrancy of the Scripture in minor things was treated as a "theological school question." In other words, those who are personally convinced of the absolute inerrancy of the Bible certainly have a right to their opinion, but they ought to remember that this is not a plain

Scriptural doctrine but merely a theological deduction, which ought not to be made a condition of church fellowship.

How much ground this attitude had gained within the Iowa Synod at that time appears from the vote taken on the question whether or not the Constitution of the American Lutheran Church should explicitly confess the absolute inerrancy of the Scriptures. The result was:

Total of votes	635
In favor	328
Opposed	300
Refrained from voting	20
Votes cast under protest	7

This result shows that the sentiment within the Iowa Synod in regard to this question was about fifty-fifty at that time.

The all-important point in this question is whether or not the absolute inerrancy of the Bible in all things is a Scriptural doctrine or merely a theological deduction. If it is a Scriptural doctrine, then it may be professed in the official confession and must be made a condition of church fellowship. If it is merely a theological deduction then it should be treated as an "Open Question" i. e. in the dictation of Iowa, and now of the American Lutheran Church, a non-divisive difference.

Here it is necessary to note the different manner in which the word "theological" is used, for in this connection the word "theological" is not used in the old Lutheran sense, according to which nothing is theological which is not Biblical, but rather in the sense which it received after the period of rationalism. When theology was regarded as a science in the same sense in which philosophy, jurisprudence, etc. are called sciences, it became necessary to extend the sphere of theology beyond the strictly Scriptural teachings, for there is nothing "scientific" in merely taking out of Scripture those truths which are to be taught in the Church. Therefore those theologians of the nineteenth century who still regarded Scripture as being a divine revelation, made a distinction between the Scriptural doctrine proper,

which was to be the contents and subject of public preaching and the confession of the Church, and the further development of this Scriptural doctrine by the theologians.

It was in this sense that Loche wrote, "We carry the treasure of divine truth in earthen vessels, i. e. in human forms and settings. We must carefully distinguish between formulas and articles of faith which have been formed after long controversies under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and which have stood the test in the crucible as perfectly Scriptural, and human additions, deductions, and conclusions built thereon, which are gradually rounding off a finished product, which is called theology, theological science." (Quel. u. Dokumente p. 235).

We find the same distinction between the Scriptural doctrines which belong to the public confession of a church body, and "theological" deductions, which should never be inserted in a confession, nor made the condition of church fellowship, throughout the official declarations of the former Iowa Synod. Those accustomed to the Lutheran definition of theology may find it difficult to accommodate themselves to this mode of expression. To them it will sound contradictory, for if a matter is not Scriptural, how can it be theological? Yet it is necessary to be acquainted with this terminology in order to be able to understand and rightly estimate the various pronouncements regarding the confession of the inerrancy of the Scriptures.

Out of the great number of statements, which might be quoted to prove this use of the word "theological" within the former Iowa Synod, we shall cite only a few. In the following statement from the year 1878 the general principle is clearly laid down. "The confession is the expression of the faith of the Church. Therefore not everything which belongs to the development of the theological knowledge can be made the object of the confession of the Church, but only that which is demanded by the interest of faith. Whatever has not in

itself the character of a confession and does not belong to the foundation of faith cannot become a confession, even though the whole Church agrees upon it. By placing such things, which according to their very nature belong only to the theological development and not to the symbolical foundation, on the same level with the symbolical doctrine, we would only shake and shatter the firmness of the very foundation. Therefore every attempt to stretch the confession beyond the limits of symbolical matters into the sphere of theological knowledge must be emphatically rejected as an offence against the Church and as harmful to the confession," etc. (Iowa and Missouri p. 157f).

Already in 1866 it was said, "that it is not the business of a church body to set up scientific theories," (p. 127) or to set up a theory or general rule between doctrines that are binding and those that are not binding in the Symbols. "That is not the business of an ecclesiastical body but of theology, and the fact that we did not distinguish in these matters more correctly and more distinctly is one of the deficiencies in carrying out our tendency, which is in principle opposed to every confusion of the general confession of the Church with any theological system." (Quel. u. Dok. p. 289f.)

In 1875 the Iowa Synod in Madison declared, "That it leaves room in its midst for differences in theological opinions as far as they keep themselves within the 'limits drawn by the confession and it must be regarded as a great sin to count and treat as a divine doctrine any point of doctrine not belonging to the articles of faith." (Quel. u. Dok. p. 302).

In the same Madison Theses we find this principle applied to concrete examples. We read, "That we understand by the tendency of a certain school, which the synod is not ready to advocate as such, the acceptance or rejection of theological opinions, such as a personal Anti-Christ, bodily resurrection, a future millenium, *Uebertragungslehre* etc." (Quel. u. Dok. p. 307)

Regarding the Sunday question the Toledo Theses affirm, "Since the doctrine contained in the Symbols concerning Sunday is an article of faith, revealed in the Word of God, therefore it must not be excluded from the sphere of binding doctrines." In regard to this thesis the colloquists of the Iowa Synod went on record with the following declaration, "From the doctrine concerning Sunday contained in the Symbols, we distinguish its more detailed theological development, which caused a divided opinion among the orthodox teachers of the Church regarding the question, whether or not the celebration of one of seven days of the week belongs to the moral part of the Third Commandment."

In these and many other statements the differences concerning the Church and the Ministry, Anti-Christ, Chiliasm, and Sunday are declared to be theological opinions and therefore non-divisive. A distinct line is drawn between Scriptural doctrines in which unity is indispensable for church fellowship, and theological deductions which do not belong in the confession of a church and must under no circumstances be made a condition of church fellowship.

Now compare with these declarations the manner in which the doctrine of the Inerrancy of Scripture was dealt with in the American Lutheran Church. The explicit confession of the inerrancy of the whole Bible, which was originally recommended by the Joint Merger Commission, was removed after a lengthy deliberation from that paragraph. Instead of asserting that the Scriptures are "the inspired and inerrant Word of God" it was changed to read, "the inspired Word of God, and the inerrant and only source, norm, and guide of faith and life." Thus only the inerrancy of the Bible in matters of Christian faith and life was confessed. But the representatives of the Ohio Synod insisted on a confession of the inerrancy of the Scriptures, and therefore an appendix to the Constitution was agreed upon. In this appendix the original wording is designated as "the Synod's official interpre-

tation of Section 1, Article 2." It reads, "The Synod believes that the canonical books of the Old and the New Testament are in their original texts, as a whole and in all their parts, the inspired and inerrant Word of God and accepts these books in the now generally recognized texts as substantially identical with the original texts and as the only inspired and inerrant authority, source, guide, norm in all matters of faith and life."

Now the question arises, Is this appendix really a part of the constitution proper and the binding confession of the American Lutheran Church? The wording seems to favor this assumption. On the other hand we find that the official declarations made immediately after the acceptance of the constitution stamp this appendix as a "theological" thesis, unfit to be embodied in a constitution of a Synod.

The Iowa "Kirchenblatt" of February, 1930, in reporting the final results of the deliberations, writes, "In the question regarding the constitutional paragraph a complete agreement was reached. The wish of our Synod to accept a simpler form in place of the more elaborate one accepted at Dubuque in 1929, was granted. It was understood that that elaborate form is more in the nature of a theological thesis and not a simple statement in which men, women and children in our congregations confess their faith."

Considering this statement in the light of the official declarations of the Iowa Synod concerning the distinction to be made between symbolical truths and theological deductions; adding to this the statement of Dr. Reu made at Waverly convention in 1928, "that this thesis (now the appendix of the Constitution of the American Lutheran Church) essentially lacks clearness and elevates more to the level of a confession than ought to be done"; and bearing in mind that the Iowa Synod has had church fellowship for many years with churches that deny the inerrancy of the Scriptures—taking all this into consideration, then try to answer the question:

Does the constitution of the American Lutheran Church really contain a clear-cut confession of the inerrancy of the Scriptures, or is the appendix merely to be regarded as a "theological thesis"?

Dr. P. E. Kretzmann in an article of the "Concordia Theological Monthly", Nov., 1932, put this very question to the American Lutheran Church. But as far as we know, no answer has ever been made. And yet a plain unmistakable answer to this question is indispensable, before any church-fellowship with the American Lutheran Church can be considered, for in spite of all assertions to the contrary, we are here dealing with an article of faith clearly taught in the Scripture.

Dr. Reu quotes the arguments of those who deny this. They say, "that in Gal. 3, 16, the question is the wording of the promise given to Abraham and therefore it belongs to the religious sphere; that in John 10,35, through the context the word of Jesus is applied to the same sphere; that in 2 Timothy, 3, 16, the context even more plainly points to this sphere, and besides the absolute inerrancy does not follow from the "theopneustos".

But the absolute inerrancy of the Scriptures is included in the doctrine of inspiration, no one can consistently assert the inspiration of the whole Bible and yet deny its inerrancy. It is true, men are often inconsistent in matters of doctrine, but to assert the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and still question its inerrancy would not be an inconsistency but a lack of veracity. The man that assumes even the possibility of an error in minor matters in the original text does not believe the plenary inspiration of the scriptures. Therefore, if the inerrancy of the Scripture is regarded as a theological question, the doctrine of the plenary inspiration is immediately rendered dubious.

As to the Scriptural proof from John 10, 35, a passage, which modernists regard as insufficient to prove the inerrancy of the Scriptures, this passage on the contrary clearly shows how futile

the modern distinction between matters of faith and life and matters of minor importance is. They allege that Christ in John 10, 34 applied the word Psalm 82, 6, "I have said, ye are gods" to the religious sphere. Even if this were true it would by no means prove, that His word, "The Scriptures cannot be broken" must be restricted to religious matters, for a general truth may be applied to special cases. But in this case even the basis of such inference is a fallacy. Psalm 82 does not deal with matters of Christian faith and life but with civil government. In verse 6 the persons in public office are on account of their authority called "gods". Now Christ by a conclusion "*a minori ad majus*", shows the Pharisees how absurd it is, in the face of this fact, to find blasphemy in His terming Himself the Son of God. If the term "gods" could be applied to civil magistrates, how much more could the term "Son of God" be applied to Him, who came from heaven to this earth! Christ here uses the passage in its original sense in which it does not deal with spiritual but with secular matters, and then stressed this one expression "gods", applied to civil authorities, as unassailable, because it is "written" in the Psalms.

If the theory according to which the inerrancy of the Scriptures must be restricted to matters of Christian faith and life, had any value, the Pharisees might have justly answered Jesus, this proof does not hold good, for Psalm 82 deals with civil magistrates only, and in such secular matters a single expression of Scripture must not be stressed. According to the modern theologians, they would have been right, for the Lord Jesus is here not using His own divine authority, but as a man among men is arguing from Scripture only. But if this whole modernistic distinction is to be rejected as a man-made invention to

escape the force of the Scriptural proof of the absolute inerrancy of the Bible, it follows that those other passages usually quoted in this connection are also valid.

Therefore the St. Louis Theses, linking the verbal inspiration and the inerrancy of the Scriptures together as inseparable, justly confess these truths as fundamental articles of faith and at the same time reject the denial of either as ruinous and even blasphemous error. This, as we have pointed out, was also the position of the Iowa Synod at the time of their fathers and was also the position of the former Ohio Synod. Thus all that is needed to establish a real unity, as far as this article is concerned, is for the American Lutheran Church to return to their old position, which is held fast in their midst by not a few, at least theoretically, to this day. It is also necessary that these principles be carried out in practice by declaring and treating the doctrine of the Inspiration and Inerrancy of the Scriptures as an article of faith and its denial a divisive error. If this is accomplished in the American Lutheran Church, then this first article of the St. Louis Theses need no longer be dreaded as a grave-digger of the unity of the Lutheran Church in this country.

On the other hand, if and as long as the inerrancy of the Scriptures is regarded and treated as a "theological" opinion, an exegetical question, unfit to be embodied in the Church's confession, and its denial regarded as a non-divisive difference, any union with the American Lutheran Church is for a truly Lutheran church body out of the question.

It follows, then, that in this first point the confession of the Missouri Synod offers an acceptable, in fact, the only possible foundation for unity of true Lutherans.

CHAPTER II. Of Conversion

In Chapters 5-9 in which the doctrines of Creation, of Man and Sin, of Redemption, and of Faith in Christ are treated, there is nothing which has any bearing on the subject of this treatise, except the statement that man is by nature inclined to all evil. But as this point must be dealt with more thoroughly in connection with the doctrine of Conversion we shall discuss this matter in its reference to the so-called wilful resistance.

While the difficulty in the doctrine of the Inerrancy of the Scriptures lies in the fact that those synods now forming the American Lutheran Church have, to a certain extent, forsaken their old sound basis, the situation is entirely reversed in the doctrine of Conversion. Here an understanding is rendered extremely difficult by the fact that our opponents have to a great extent accommodated themselves to our terminology, even using terms which were formerly rejected by them, but giving them a meaning entirely different from ours, so that their present doctrinal position, though slightly altered in some minor points, is essentially the same as it always has been, long before the intersynodical conferences were held.

The first statement, that the spokesmen of the former Iowa and Ohio Synods have learned to adapt themselves to our mode of diction, will not be denied by anyone, who has ever read the Chicago Theses. The language in the theses setting forth the doctrine of Conversion is so typical by "Missourian" that in our circles they caused an almost general satisfaction. The impression given was that our opponents had entirely given up their old position and that a complete understanding and unity in this doctrine had been accomplished. And yet one of the authors of these theses, Dr. George Fritschel tells us himself that on their part these expressions are meant in the old Iowan sense, as the doctrine is stated in the St. Seebald Theses of 1880. Of the latter he

says, "That is the doctrine to which we Iowans have pledged ourselves at our ordination. ANOTHER DOCTRINE OF IOWA WE DO NOT KNOW. And that this is the doctrine of Iowa is shown by the Chicago Theses which are nothing else but a mode of stating this good old doctrine under a certain aspect (unter bestimmter Voraussetzung), though not in our phrases. But of what consequence are words and phrases as compared with the subject-matter? The truth can be expressed in all kinds of phrases." (Kirchl. Zeitschrift, September, 1930, p. 547.)

What is the "good old doctrine" of the St. Seebald Theses? Dr. Fritschel quotes two of these theses which are indeed unobjectionable, since they reject the coarse synergism, but the seventh thesis reads, "Hence the eternal lot of man does not depend upon an unconditional decree of an electional grace operating irresistably, regardless of the different conduct of man, but the different conduct of men over against the offered grace is indeed thereby to be taken into consideration." (Quel. u. Dok., p. 351.)

In these words Calvinism is not only justly condemned, but at the same time the eternal lot of man, i. e. eternal salvation as well as perdition is indiscriminately made dependent on the conduct of man over against the offered grace. This different conduct might perhaps be construed as meaning faith and unbelief, if it were not for the other statements in this set of theses, which repeat the same thought and distinctly declare that in the different conduct over against the offered grace a difference of the natural and the wilful resistance, hence a DIFFERENT CONDUCT OF NATURAL MAN, is meant.

Thus thesis 18 reads, "When the reason, why one of two men hearing the Gospel in like manner comes to faith and the other does not, by systematically refraining from pointing to the

different conduct over against grace, and by systematically ignoring the Lutheran distinction of the malicious and the natural resistance, is sought solely in the secret unfathomable will of God, doing according to His sovereign power what He wills, this is nothing else than an absolute predestination." (l. c. p. 352),

In these words truth and error are again interwoven in such a manner as to condemn the denial of two different kinds of resistance together with Calvinism. The same fallacy is found in the very complicated 19th thesis, "When the difference between the Lutheran and the Calvinistic doctrine of Predestination (instead of referring to the particularistic, absolute character of Calvin's doctrine of predestination which ignores all difference in man's conduct on the one hand, and the Lutheran doctrine of the twofold resistance on the other hand) is defined as merely consisting in this that the Calvinistic doctrine answers the question why some come to faith and others not, while the Lutheran doctrine drops this question, then the Lutheran doctrine is essentially one with the Calvinistic doctrine of an absolute predestination, since that definition of the pretended Lutheran doctrine rather denotes exactly the Augustinian doctrine of predestination." (l. c. p. 352).

In these last words the doctrine of our Synod and of all other Lutherans that agree with us is condemned in plain and unmistakable words as Calvinistic and Augustinian. At the same time the question why some are converted while others are not is answered by the distinction of a twofold kind of resistance of natural man over against the offered grace. The St. Seebald Theses are, as Dr. Fritschel assures us, to this day the official doctrine of Iowa, to which they have all pledged themselves at their ordination, AND THAT DOCTRINE THEY ALSO FIND IN THE CHICAGO THESES in spite of the different terminology of the latter. This shows beyond a shadow of doubt that their mode of expression has changed, while their doctrine is mater-

ially the same as it was fifty and even sixty years ago, for there is a remarkable resemblance between the leading thoughts of these St. Seebald Theses and the article written by Prof. Gottfr. Fritschel in Brobst's "Monatshefte" in 1872.

How much the Ohio Synod even after the completion of the Chicago Theses still held to its old belief is seen e. g. from an article published in the Ohio KIRCHZEITUNG, April and May, 1930. In this article the doctrine of the Missouri Synod is still termed a Calvinistic error and Professors Loy and Stelhorn are highly praised for their valiant fight against this doctrine.

Wherein, then, does the change which undoubtedly has taken place in their mode of presenting the doctrine of Conversion consist? What is the main substance of their teaching which has so far remained unchanged?

If these questions are to be answered thoroughly, we cannot shirk the somewhat unpleasant task of referring to the older presentations of their doctrine which have been dropped long ago as being deficient and unsatisfactory, and which might be buried and rest in peace, if it were not for the fact that the main issue defended in these statements is adhered to by the American Lutheran Church to this day.

The older manner of teaching within the Ohio Synod usually proceeded from the assumption that man is by nature inclined not only to the natural but also the so-called wilful resistance. This is sound Lutheran doctrine. The Formula of Concord says, that man is by nature "inclined to ALL EVIL also that he is not only weak, incapable, unfit and dead to good, but also (is) so lamentably perverted, infected and corrupted by original sin that he is entirely evil, perverse and hostile to God by his disposition and nature, and that he is exceedingly strong, alive and active with respect TO EVERYTHING THAT IS DISPLEASES AND CONTRARY TO GOD." (St. Louis ed. p. 243.)

To say that these words must be re-

stricted to the natural resistance, that the wilful resistance must be excepted from those things which are displeasing and contrary to God, that man is by nature not so bad as to really frustrate his conversion — that would be denying the Lutheran doctrine of the total depravity of natural man.

If this is certain, then, wherever a conversion is to be accomplished either the absence or the overcoming of the wilful resistance must be accounted for in some way. This has always been the weakest point in the theory of the former Ohio and Iowa Synods. Try as hard as you please, you cannot explain the abstaining from wilful resistance, or its being overcome in any other manner than by ascribing it either to the grace of the Holy Spirit alone, or to the activity of man, or to both working together. The first was always rejected by them as Calvinism, the second is Pelagianism, and the third is synergism.

It is true, in the very beginning of the controversy little thought was given to this dilemma. Dr. Gottfr. Fritschel simply ignored it when in 1872 he explained, "That God desires to save some as well as the others, that he earnestly endeavors to take away the resistance of some as well as of others, but that with some His loving design is frustrated because they reject the offered grace stubbornly and wilfully, while in the others God's work is accomplished because they do not resist wilfully but suffer God's grace to work in them." ("Monatshefte", 1872, p. 99.) Here the absence of the wilful resistance is given as the reason why some people are converted while others are not, without attempting to explain the reason for this absence.

But as the controversy continued, this deficiency was felt. Everyone can see that if man is by nature inclined to wilful resistance against the grace of God operating on him by the Word, then this obstacle of conversion must be overcome in some way. Dr. F. W. Stellhorn who was perhaps the ablest exponent of the Ohio position at the

earlier stage, always keenly felt this difficulty. To him it was impossible to adjust himself to the more recent mode of teaching because he clearly saw the necessity of explaining the absence or the checking or restraining of the wilful resistance. In this respect an article on "The Wilful Resistance" written by him on request for the late "Sprechsaal" is very instructive and interesting. In this article we see the author struggling with this very difficulty and trying to explain that which from his premises can not be explained without synergism. After having pointed out the distinction between the natural and the wilful resistance he proceeds, "If there is a resistance which makes it impossible for the Holy Spirit to convert man as long as it exists, it must either be abstained from by a man that is to be converted, or else, if it was there, it must be abandoned, or otherwise he could not be converted. It is man who resists; he and no one else selfevidently is the one who does not resist if the resistance does not take place. Now the further question arises, When this resistance does not take place and when man is thus converted, whence does this come? Does God simply take away this resistance or does He not permit it to set in, so that the man in whom this occurs can not hinder his conversion and must be converted? If this were the case we should have an irresistible grace of conversion (Bekehrungsgnade) whether it would be called thus or not; and that would be Calvinism. However, if this is not the case, then God in conversion must operate on man in such a manner as to enable him to omit this resistance by virtue of just this divine influence although in spite of it he is still able to exercise it according to his formally free will and his corrupt natural powers. To suppose that he have by nature this strength or faculty to abstain from this resistance would be synergism, but if he is able to abstain from it, and without this abstaining he cannot be converted, this ability or faculty must be communicated to him by the

converting grace, though not yet, as in the converted as something possessed by, and inherent in, him." ("Sprech-saal" 1 No. 4 p. 200f.)

The author argues thus:— If Calvinism is to be avoided, man must be able to overcome wilful resistance, that fatal obstacle of his conversion, however not with powers that are given him (or else it would be Laterman's synergism) but with powers that are offered him by the Holy Ghost, yet not possessed by him. So then, according to this theory, all hinges on the question whether or not the unconverted man will make use of such an ability "not yet his own". We must not lose sight of the fact that the will of natural man is above all opposed and inimical to God. Who, then, at this juncture changes the ^{man's} willingness of natural man into willingness? Is it the Holy Ghost, Who worketh in him both to will and to do? If at this point the overcoming of the wilful resistance would only be ascribed to the Holy Ghost then there would be no quarrel between us, for this would be the same as our doctrine.

On the other hand, if the will of natural man decides the question whether or not he will make use of that faculty, how can anyone say that conversion is solely the work of the Holy Ghost, since in that case the all important decision is made by the corrupt will of natural man? To make the will of natural man the determining factor in restraining the wilful resistance is synergism which differs from Laterman's only in this that, according to the latter, man works together with the Holy Ghost with powers given him before he is converted, while according to Dr. Stelhorn, he works with powers not yet inherent in him (whatever that may be). In either case the will of natural man makes the all important decision.

It was in this sense that Dr. Stelhorn wrote, that it is "unchristian and heathenish to say that the actual obtaining of the salvation procured and meant by God for all men depends in no respect on the conduct of man over

against the grace of God, but in every respect on God alone." ("Luth. Kirchenz." May 15, 1885.) But although this expression never found much sympathy within the Ohio Synod and was later retracted, yet the sense in which it was meant was always upheld in the Ohio Synod and is still upheld in the American Lutheran Church.

In the "Theological Magazine," Sept., 1913, p. 740, Dr. Th. Mees wrote, "A rather unfortunate and ambiguous expression is frequently quoted against Ohio, which in controversy has become the very center of conflict, i. e. that man's salvation does not depend solely on God's grace, but in a certain sense also on human conduct, to which, however, an intentionally perverted meaning is imparted by the constant insertion of the word "good" before "conduct". We have always deplored the expression and have never adopted it, deeming it both dangerous and useless. It is defensible in the sense only that the evil conduct of man over against the power of the Holy Spirit conveyed in the means of grace is the cause of man's condemnation and hence the persistent rejection of grace the cause for the loss of salvation".

But the unfortunate expression does not mention the loss of salvation. On the contrary, it makes the actual obtaining of salvation dependent on the conduct of man. This conduct therefore cannot possibly be "the evil conduct of man." However, in these words of Dr. Mees a marked dissent is already noticeable as to the mode of expressing the matter, although there is no real difference in doctrine and in the leading ideas. That the fundamental thought remains the same is apparent from another remark of Dr. Mees which deals with the mystery why some are converted while others are not. "If it does not lie in God," he says, "then it must lie in the soul of man, where else can it lie? We therefore call it a psychological mystery." ("Theol. Mag.," Mar. 1914, p. 190).

According to his own declaration Dr. Mees had here in mind the difference

between the natural and the wilful resistance. This difference has at all times remained the unchanged basis of all their reasoning in this doctrine, however different they presented the matter in detail.

Although Dr. Mees' ideas as to the part which this difference plays in the process of conversion and salvation, were yet somewhat hazy, Dr. Lenski and George Fritschel endeavored to develop a more elaborate theory of this to them all important distinction, carefully avoiding the synergistic expressions of the older theory.

The most inopportune feature in the older mode of arguing always was the abstaining from or the overcoming of the wilful resistance, which, if not ascribed to the grace of God alone, must in some way be attributed to the will of natural man, and this under all circumstances amounts to synergism, be it ever so subtle. This difficulty disappears if the matter could be presented in such a manner as to make an explanation of the absence of the wilful resistance superfluous. This is done by representing the wilful resistance as a mysterious inconceivable wickedness (beyond the natural depravity of man), the origin of which can not be explained and the absence of which is simply the normal condition which is to be expected. This conception does away with the difficulty of accounting for the absence of, or the overcoming of, the wilful resistance. According to this idea the absence of the wilful resistance is nothing extraordinary. No act of omitting or suppressing anything on the part of man is to be supposed in that case, but we have merely the normal state of affairs which needs no special explanation. It is true, man resists the grace of the Holy Spirit with all his faculties, but this is still the natural resistance. In this case man will be converted, and it is the Holy Ghost alone who overcomes the natural resistance without any cooperation on the part of man. On the other hand, if, and as often as man offers the other kind of resistance, which always is an unsurmountable obstacle, the Holy Ghost can not operate

on his soul, and man remains unconverted. This is the theory which has more and more displaced that of Dr. Stelhorn.

It is evident that in this case the mystery lies in the soul of man and is purely psychological. It cannot be explained why in some cases, in fact in the vast majority of cases, man goes beyond his natural corruption to a wickedness worse than that proceeding with inner necessity from his corrupt nature. The advantage gained by this modification is quite obvious. With the difficulty of accounting for the absence or the overcoming of the wilful resistance removed the entire work of conversion may be attributed to the Holy Ghost alone, who, without any cooperation on the part of man, overcomes his natural resistance. The conversion, or "the actual OBTAINING of salvation" is no longer explained as being dependant on any kind of human conduct but only the NON-CONVERSION is attributed to a peculiar conduct of man, an additional wickedness.

That this is the conception which has more and more gained ground within the synods of Ohio and Iowa over against the older form may be shown by a few quotations. The difference between a kind of resistance which the Holy Ghost overcomes in conversion and another kind, a mysterious wickedness, which invariably frustrates conversion is brought out in the following words by Dr. Lenski: "There is a resistance which after all DOES NOT TEAR AWAY FROM THE SPIRIT AND WORD OF GOD. There, through Word and Spirit, the work goes on, there finally, perhaps very soon, a conversion is accomplished. This is usually called the natural resistance. But in many people, in a manner inexplicable to us, after the Spirit and Word have made an impression, such a resistance is offered that the Holy Ghost is unable to effect a conversion, the way is blocked to Him. This is usually called the wilful resistance." ("Luth. Kirchenz", Nov., 1923, p. 690.)

Of the abstaining from wilful resistance he says, "In the old controversy

some had an idea as though man were able to abstain from resistance by 'powers communicated to him by the grace of God'. As though before his conversion God gave him powers by which he could drop his resistance, leaving it for man to decide whether he would use these powers or not. This whole conception is to be rejected, and justly so. There are no such powers of grace given to the unconverted man which this man could either use or leave unused. Before his conversion no one operates with powers of grace. He who operates, from whom all efficiency proceeds, is God alone with His Spirit and His grace in the means of grace." ("Luth. Kirchengz," October, 1923, p. 659.)

For this reason Dr. Lenski was not quite satisfied with the wording of the first antithesis in the chapter of Conversion as found in the Chicago Theses, which rejects the expression, that men may abstain from natural OR WILFUL resistance, either by natural powers or powers of grace communicated to him. So little does this expression fit in the new system that it seems senseless even to reject it. He says, "What we dislike in this antithesis is the old expression of abstaining from wilful resistance which should altogether disappear in the doctrine of conversion. Why warm it up again? Where God's gracious powers do their work according to His will, there man is converted — that is all their is to it. To speak or to think as if man in that case had abstained from wilful resistance is inaccurate (schief) and therefore misleading! When possibilities do not become realities, this is by no means an abstaining." (l. c., October, p. 660)

It is important to observe that not an INCLINATION to resist wilfully, but only the POSSIBILITY of it is here ascribed to natural man. If an inclination to do evil does not become a reality this does indeed involve an abstaining on the part of man.

Dr. George Fritschel sets forth the difference between the two kinds of resistance in the following words: "1. The wilful resistance differs from the natural resistance not only gradually but

specifically. 2. The natural resistance is merely a different expression for the original depravity in its manifestation. 3. The natural resistance is found in man before, in and after conversion. 4. The natural resistance hinders conversion and puts many obstacles in its way, but it does not prevent conversion. 5. The natural resistance is rather overcome by grace, and the old man is subdued, yet it remains until death as a constant danger for man. . . . 13. The effect of wilful resistance is that the work of grace is not only hindered but that it must cease entirely if the self-hardening becomes permanent. . . . 15. This does not mean that in every case with an act of wilful resistance, conversion is rendered impossible for all times; for the saving grace may start afresh and may a second or a tenth time accomplish that which before was impossible. . . . 17. The question about the origin of wilful resistance, as the question about the origin of sin itself, leads us into the depths of personal inner life, unknown to us and we stand here before a psychological mystery which we therefore do not try to solve." ("Die Lehre v. d. Bekerung nach D. Hoeneckes Dogmatik", p. 45ff.)

This [redacted] 17 agrees with the thesis of Professor Becker, "This question can be answered as little as the question, why Adam sinned". Mark well! Here also only a possibility of resisting wilfully is ascribed to natural man and not an inclination, just as in Adam before the fall there was a possibility of sinning but not an inclination to sin. Otherwise there would be no mystery at this point.

To sum up the results to be drawn from the foregoing statements the permanent and so far unaltered element in the older as well as in the newer conception is the distinction between two specifically different kinds of resistance of natural man over against the work of the Holy Spirit. As soon as this distinction is dropped, the mystery, the unanswerable question, is inevitably this: Why is the result of the same grace of God unequal with men that are equally corrupt and who equally re-

sist the grace of God? In other words, Why is it that of two men, who equally resist the work of the Holy Ghost, one is converted and saved while the other is not converted and lost?

But this question, "whence this difference?" is answered, either explicitly, as was done fifty and sixty years ago, or at least implicitly, by the assumption of these two kinds of resistance, one of which is overcome by the Holy Spirit, while the other invariably arrests the work of God and thus renders a conversion impossible, while it is present. At the same time, as stated before, the new question arises: Why is it that in most people this additional wickedness takes place which is not found in others? Why is it that in one and the same person at one time this additional wickedness is present, preventing his conversion, while at another time, it is not found in him?

Here the advocates of this theory of a twofold kind of resistance are treading on very thin ice. It is easy enough to state that we are here dealing with a psychological mystery, that the origin of this wickedness is shrouded in darkness even as the origin of sin in Paradise, when there was no sinful inclination in man but only the possibility of falling into sin. But this answer will be satisfactory only to those that deny the natural inclination of sinful man to this wilful resistance. Those that know and accept the teaching of our Symbols will ask, Is not man by nature corrupt enough to prevent and frustrate the work of the Holy Ghost? Must an additional wickedness be invented in order to explain this outcome? Is there any sense in asserting that we cannot explain why natural man who is "exceedingly strong, alive, and active with respect to everything that is displeasing and contrary to God," should wilfully resist the Holy Ghost? Those that believe the Scriptural doctrine of total depravity of sinful man know there is not only a possibility of wilful resistance in natural man but a strong inclination to it. To them therefore this wilful resistance is the most natural

thing on earth, the conduct of man that is to be expected; and the surprising thing is, that in spite of this wickedness **men are converted.**

Are the advocates of this distinction between the two kinds of resistance ready to deny the inclination of natural man to resist wilfully? If so, then from now on the search light should be directed to this very point, and the doctrine of the total depravity of natural man in spiritual things be made the center of the controversy; for this error would be worse than synergism. It would amount to an adulteration of the Scriptural and symbolical doctrine of original sin.

On the other hand, if they confess the Lutheran doctrine of the total depravity of natural man, who is inclined to every evil, wilful resistance not excepted, then they are thrown back on the old difficulty which Dr. Stelhorn always so unsuccessfully grappled with, namely, to explain the omitting of wilful resistance without blundering into synergism. But they cannot have it both ways. They cannot confess the inclination of natural man to wilful resistance and still call the origin of this conduct an inexplicable mystery, its absence the normal condition of natural man which needs no explanation.

It is perhaps not superfluous to add that it is not the mere distinction between a natural and wilful resistance which is to be rejected. There are many different ways in which the enmity of natural man against God manifests itself, and according to them, various distinctions may be introduced here. But no matter what distinctions are employed, the all important point is to attribute the absence or the overcoming of whatever kind of resistance there is, the wilful resistance included, to the gracious working of the Holy Ghost alone. Then, and then only, all synergism or similar errors are excluded.

Comparing the older and the newer mode of presenting the opposite doctrine we find that the difference lies more in the expressions employed than in the principal views. For all practical

purposes there is very little difference whether you say that the natural man suppresses the wilful resistance with powers offered him by the Holy Ghost, or that, if a conversion takes place, the wilful resistance is not there, without explaining its absence. In either case not grace alone but the different conduct of man over against the offered grace is the deciding factor, although in the newer mode of presentation this fact is partly veiled by evading the real difficulty. If the absence of the wilful resistance were the normal state of man, the condition to be expected, then, indeed the "sola gratia" might be safe-guarded by ascribing the overcoming of the natural resistance alone to the grace of God, leaving the absence of the wilful resistance unexplained. But we have seen, that this theory is inadmissible in face of the Scriptural doctrine of the total depravity of natural man.

There is one passage in the second Article of the Formula of Concord, in part also quoted in the Chicago Theses which is supposed to prove that there is a kind of resistance which the Holy Ghost is unable to overcome. It reads, "However that many are called and few chosen, Matthew 22, 14, does not mean that God is not willing to save everybody; but the reason is that they either do not at all hear God's Word, but wilfully despise it, stop their ears and harden their hearts, and in this manner foreclose the ordinary way to the Holy Ghost, so that He cannot perform His work in them, or when they have heard it, make light of it again and do not heed it, for which not God and His election, but their own wickedness, is responsible. (2 Peter, 2, 1ff Luke 11, 49-52; Hebrew 12, 25 f)."

Anyone can see that in this passage two classes of despisers are mentioned, such as **do not hear the Word of God at all**, and such as **hear it with the ear but do not take it to heart**. Of the first it says, that "they foreclose the ordinary way to the Holy Ghost, so that He cannot perform His work in them," because ordinarily He works through the Word only. Of the second

it says that their perdition is entirely their own fault, which of course, is true of all those that through their resistance hinder the work of the Holy Ghost. But no trace can be found in these words of two kinds of resistance in those that hear the Word. And this is always the difficulty that in two hearers of the Word one is converted, the other is lost. As to the truth that without the Word the Holy Ghost ordinarily does not operate, there is no difference at all.

Having thus analyzed the situation as it appears in consequence of the somewhat altered mode on the part of our opponents in presenting the doctrine of Conversion we can now proceed to our proper task of comparing the official confession of our Synod with the Chicago Theses and see why it is that our opponents, while rejecting the former, were able to accept the latter.

Reading the Chicago Theses one might gain the impression as though it were impossible to harmonize the wording of some statements even with the present doctrinal position of the former Ohio and Iowa Synods. Thesis 4 e.g. states that "all men are by nature equally guilty (in eadem culpa, Rom. 3, 23-24.) that is, they all by nature act **only wickedly** against God's Word and grace. This is true of those who by the grace of God are converted and of those who are lost through their own guilt. (F. C. 716, 57-58; Trigl, 1081)."

According to these words, is not the conduct of those that are lost equal to the conduct of those who are converted? And does not this do away with that unfortunate distinction between the two different kinds of resistance? According to our way of expression it does, but it does not in the sense in which our opponents understand these words. From their point of view this thesis simply describes only the natural resistance which at first is found in all men alike, whether they are later converted or remain unconverted. For them the so-called wilful resistance which may be added later, does not yet come into question at this point. It is not mentioned before the 9th

thesis.

In discussing these theses in the "Luth. Kztg.", Dr. Lenski remarks on the passage just quoted, "It is not so that a man who is resisting naturally bears the same guilt as one that is resisting willfully. To speak thus of the equal guilt is false doctrine. Says the F. C., and the thesis repeats it, that one resisting willfully is heaping guilt on guilt and falls into God's judgment. There must therefore be a difference and there actually is a difference of the resistance of those who are finally lost." (Nov. 3, 1923.)

Again, "There is no man who does not resist naturally . . . and insofar it is entirely correct and pure doctrine to say, they are by nature in the same guilt, i.e. 'they all by nature act only wickedly against God's Word and grace', and here the expression, 'by nature,' ought to be underlined and emphasized." (November 10, 1932)

Thus step by step it might be shown and proven that our opponents find in the words of the Chicago Theses a meaning altogether different from the sense in which they are taken in our circles. But since these theses are not at present a vital issue, and since we have Dr. Fritschel's word that on their side they find nothing but the doctrine of the St. Seebald Theses in them, it may suffice for the present to point out the two gravest neglects which leave the door open for such duplicity.

The one is, that the false distinction between two different kinds of resistance is in no way rejected. This omission made it possible for the colloquists from the Iowa and Ohio side, while they stretched themselves to the uttermost to come as near as possible to our phraseology yet to take every expression in their own sense.

The second fatal omission is that the mystery in the doctrine of Conversion and Election is in no place specified, which leaves it open for us to think of the ancient mystery of the "discretio personarum", and for them of their "psychological mystery".

These deficiencies are thoroughly re-

moved in the St. Louis Theses. Thesis 12 says, "For this refraining from wilful resistance or from any kind of resistance is also solely a work of grace which 'changes unwilling into willing men'. Ez. 36, 26; Phil. 2, 13." By ascribing the refraining from wilful resistance to the grace of the Holy Ghost alone, the older as well as the newer mode of presenting the opposing doctrine is barred. For the whole distinction between one kind of resistance which is overcome by the Holy Spirit and another which He is unable to overcome collapses the moment the refraining from wilful resistance is ascribed solely to the grace of the Holy Ghost.

Furthermore towards the end of Article 15 the St. Louis Theses state, "The F. C. describes the mystery which confronts us here, not as a mystery in man's heart (a "psychological" mystery) but teaches that when we try to understand why one is hardened, blinded, given over to a reprobate mind, while another, who is indeed in the same guilt, is converted again, we enter the domain of the unsearchable judgments of God and ways past finding out, which are not revealed to us in His word, but which we shall know in eternal life, 1 Cor. 13, 12".

For the American Lutheran Church to accept these words would mean to give up their present doctrinal position, for the psychological mystery is an indispensable part of their doctrine. On the other hand, to make the doctrine of Conversion as set forth in the Chicago Theses the basis of church fellowship would have meant for us to sanction an entirely un-Lutheran and un-Scriptural distinction, a distinction which in this form is found neither in the Confessions of our Church nor even in the writings of the dogmatists of the seventeenth century. It is quite true that the latter also distinguished between natural and malicious resistance; but with them the malicious or wilful resistance is nothing but the natural resistance stubbornly continued, not a mysterious wickedness the origin of which is clouded in darkness. This "psychologi-

cal mystery" is a "novum" in the Lutheran Church, a strange doctrine which was unknown before the controversy about Conversion and Predestination.

Thus, while the Chicago Theses merely ignore the differences still existing, the St. Louis Theses offer a basis for real unity. As long as this Scriptural

and genuinely Lutheran doctrine of Conversion is rejected by the American Lutheran Church, any kind of church union between them and the Synodical Conference would bear the curse of untruthfulness and no real good could result from such an alliance.

CHAPTER III

Of Objective Justification

During the controversy over the doctrine of Conversion another difference occasionally turned up which the Chicago Theses completely ignored, although it is by no means negligible since it concerns the center of the whole Christian doctrine, the "articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae", the doctrine of Justification. Because of the central position of this article and its close connection with all other doctrines it is only natural that a difference in the doctrine of Conversion and the Origin of Faith would also manifest itself in a different conception of the doctrine of Justification and of the manner in which faith participates in it.

The difference carries us back even to the meritorious work of our Savior, the objective reconciliation of the whole sinful world. When we read in 2 Cor. 5, 19, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, **not imputing their trespasses unto them,**" we see that it is plainly taught in these words that the reconciliation of the sinful world consists in this, that God no longer imputes their sins to the world, because the Son of God through His suffering and death has made atonement for the sins which God had imputed to Him, the sins of the whole world. (2 Cor. 5, 21; John 1, 29). Therefore the Apostle writes Rom. 4, 25 that Christ is raised for our justification. This is called the **objective** justification of the world, objective because it is not yet subjectively appropriated by the sinner but only indicates the fruit of Christ's redemptive work as far as God's vindictive justice is concerned.

It is quite true that this objective justification is in a way still a one-sided affair. To make the reconciliation complete both sides must act. The pardon which God offers to sinners must be accepted by them in order to save them, and there is where **subjective** justification or forgiveness of sins by faith enters in.

But it is just as true that without preceding objective justification no subjective justification by faith alone would be possible. For if faith in justification is nothing but the act of accepting, there must needs be an objective good to be accepted; this objective good is the forgiveness of sins which is offered in the Gospel, for the Gospel is the proclamation of a **FACT**, the great pardon of the whole world on the basis of Christ's meritorious work, and this pardon remains a fact whether appropriated by faith or not. 2 Tim. 2, 13, "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself."

If faith in justification were the price to be paid by man in order to receive the gift, the condition under which the pardon is to be granted, then there would be no necessity, in fact no room for an objective justification; for the forgiveness of sins, in that case, would only be offered to a man as a good to be earned by his proper conduct, and faith would not be counted as the mere accepting of a gift freely offered, but as a work to be done. Then forgiveness of sin would no longer be by grace, would not be a free gift of divine mercy, but a prize granted to him who gains it by fulfilling the condition. This is es-

sentially the Roman conception of justification.

However, it is easily seen that in justification also faith must assume the character of a condition to be fulfilled on the part of man, a work to be done by him, if in conversion the human conduct always lurks in the background as the all deciding factor in the question why of two persons one is converted while the other is not. Then, of course, there is no room for an objective justification, and this doubtless is the reason why the doctrine of an objective justification was repeatedly at-

tacked by our opponents.

The St. Louis Theses do not omit this difference but state [REDACTED] 17, "Scripture teaches that God has already declared the whole world to be righteous in Christ, Rom. 7, 19; 2 Cor. 5, 18-21; Rom. 4, 25; that therefore not for the sake of their good works, but without the works of the Law, by grace, for Christ's sake, He justifies, that is, accounts as righteous, all those who believe in Christ, that is, believe, accept and rely on, the fact that for Christ's sake their sins are forgiven."

CHAPTER IV

Of The Church

The doctrine of Good Works and the doctrine of the Means of Grace were never in dispute between the Synodical Conference and the synods now forming the American Lutheran Church. But the doctrine of the Church was from the very beginning the object of a heated controversy. It was a conflict between the original Lutheran conception of the Church and one of the newer theories concerning the Church, which in the course of time had arisen in Germany when Walther and Loehe, after several futile attempts to reach an understanding, were finally compelled to admit an open break. The result of this break was the founding of the Iowa Synod in opposition to Missouri. Nor were the differences between the respective synods in this doctrine ever removed, even though Loehe's principles were never fully carried out by the Iowans in practice; for in principle they still hold to Loehe's conception of the Church.

The original Lutheran doctrine of the Church, which is strictly Scriptural, stands in close relation to the doctrine of Justification. This is distinctly brought out by the manner in which this doctrine is presented in the St. Louis Theses. "The members of the Christian Church are the Christians, that is, all those who have despaired of their own righteousness before God

and believe that God forgives their sins for Christ's sake. The Christian Church, in the proper sense of the term, is composed of believers only, Acts 5 14; 26, 18; which means that no person in whom the Holy Ghost has wrought faith in the Gospel, or—which is the same thing—in the doctrine of Justification, can be divested of his membership in the Christian Church; and, on the other hand, that no person in whose heart this faith does not dwell can be invested with such membership," etc. (St. Louis Theses, [REDACTED] 24).

On the other hand, we find, that the various modern conceptions of the Church, while not exactly denying its spiritual character, more or less stress the idea that the Church is not merely the invisible congregation of all believers but rather a visible institution, a realm, which like the kingdoms of this world needs a visible government with divine authority. But even Loehe and his co-workers could not entirely ignore the fact that the doctrine of the Church as taught by Walther and the Missouri Synod was that genuinely Lutheran doctrine professed in the Symbols of our Church. The policy of the Missouri Synod is termed in the "Kirchl. Mittheilungen", 1852, page 12, "the American practical development of the singular ("individuell") Lutheran doctrine" (Quellen u. Dokumente, p.

109), and in the same paper it is admitted that the Missourian conception of the Church is "the historical interpretation of the Symbols." (p. 92)

Since the time of Rationalism and the union of the Lutheran and the Reformed Church in Prussia, the Lutheran Symbols have not been held in the same high esteem in the various German churches as formerly, and therefore the theologians of the nineteenth century were not at all bashful in criticizing these Confessions and in openly admitting their disagreement with them in several points of doctrine, contending that the genuine Lutheran doctrine of the Church was not adequate. But the Iowa Synod as a Lutheran body could not well follow in their footsteps, in disagreeing with the Confessions in this point. Iowa was therefore confronted with the task of harmonizing with the Lutheran Symbols a doctrine which had been introduced as an alleged improvement on the original Lutheran doctrine and was, as its authors admitted, at variance with the Symbols.

It is self-evident that the bulk of the symbolical statements concerning the doctrine of the Church was useless for their purpose. But there is one passage in the "Apology", which the Iowans have always claimed as their stronghold in proving their doctrine to be Symbolical. This passage, if detached from its context, seems to have a certain resemblance to the Iowan conception of the Church.

The passage reads, "The Christian Church consists not alone in fellowship of outward signs but it consists especially in inward communion of eternal blessings in the heart, as of the Holy Ghost, of faith, of the fear and love of God." (Book of Concord (St. Louis Edit.) p. 71)

In these words the Iowans have always found their own doctrine, paraphrasing the words thus: The Church has a visible and an invisible side, the latter being the most important feature. It consists principally in the inward communion of eternal blessings, but it ought not be denied that the Church also has a visible side, which

consists in the fellowship of outward signs: Word and Sacraments constituting the visible side of the Church.

The wording of this passage, quoted from the "Apology", passed over into the various official statements of their doctrinal position. The Davenport Theses e.g. read, "Over against it (the Missourian position) we contend, that the Church is principally the communion of the Holy Ghost and faith in the heart, but it is also the communion of Word and Sacrament, and in this sense visible and invisible." ("Quel. u. Dok.," p. 358)

The Michigan City Theses state, "The Church in its proper sense is the congregation of the true believers, created and edifying itself through the means of grace. Hence,

(a) as to its essence the Church on earth is and remains invisible.

(b) The Communion of the means of grace is a necessary manifestation of the Church and an infallible mark of its existence."

"And in so far" (the Toledo Theses add) "the Church is visible."

The Richmond Theses, in unmistakable adaptation to the wording of the above-mentioned quotation, likewise read, "In the doctrine of the Church it is essential to the faith and confession of the Church that the Church is the Communion of believers. "Principaliter societas fidei" that to the "ecclesia stricte sic dicta" no unbeliever and hypocrite belong, that membership in the body of Christ is solely dependent on faith, in which doctrine the antithesis to the Roman doctrine is expressed all external "Opus Operatum" denied, and every Roman hierarchical idea and the whole Roman conception of the Church, in which the whole Roman error is concentrated, rejected. But it would be wrong for anyone to deny that the Church of Jesus Christ appeared only in the divine means of grace as a manifestation of the faith of the believers, not as the divine principle of life out of which the Church of the Lord continually edified itself, because in that case, the Lutheran doctrine of the means of grace in

the definition of the Church would not receive its due." (Quel, u. Dok., p. 366)

It is not easy to find the exact meaning of the second part of this thesis, for even in the German original it seems somewhat muddled. (Aber falsch waere es, wenn jemand leugnen wollte, dass die Kirche Jesu Christi an den goettlichen Gnadenmitteln bloss als eine Betaetigung des Glaubens der Gläubigen erschienen, nicht als der goettliche Lebensgrund, aus welchem die Kirche des Herrn sich fort und fort erbaut, und weil dann die lutherische Lehre von den Gnadenmitteln im Kirchenbegriff nicht zu ihrem Recht kaeme.") The gist of the matter is undoubtedly this, that the means of grace must not be viewed merely as NOTAE ECCLESIAE, or marks of the Church, but as ESSENTIAL PARTS of the Church, rendering the invisible Church visible.

Let us therefore examine the passage from the APOLOGY and see whether it really teaches, what Iowa has always contended, that the Church in the proper sense of the word is visible and invisible at the same time. If this be true, then this one passage would be at variance with all those numerous statements of the Symbols, in which the Church is defined as a strictly spiritual and invisible realm, the congregation of saints, and nothing more.

Articles VII and VIII of the APOLOGY, in which this passage is found, are a vindication of the doctrine of the Church as set forth in Articles VII and VIII of the AUGSBURG CONFESSION, which read, "Article VII: OF THE CHURCH. Also they teach that ONE HOLY CHURCH is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered. And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men should be everywhere alike. As Paul says, One faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of all, etc. Eph. 4.5. 6."

"Article VIII: WHAT THE CHURCH IS. Although THE CHURCH properly is the congregation of saints and true believers, nevertheless, since in this life many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled therewith, it is lawful to use Sacraments administered by evil men, according to the saying of Christ: The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat etc Matt. 23, 2. Both the Sacraments and the Word are effectual by reason of the institution and commandment of Christ, notwithstanding they be administered by evil men. They condemn the Donatists, and such like, who denied it to be lawful to use the ministry of evil men in the Church, and who thought the ministry of evil men to be unprofitable and of none effect." Book of Concord (St Louis Edit.) p. 13)

These two articles were condemned in the Roman Confutation at Augsburg, the Romanists claiming that the hypocrites and unbelievers must not be excluded from the definition of the Church, since the Roman conception of the Church is that of an external realm, which includes all those who are under its hierarchy. It is against this antithesis that the words in question are directed, as the opening words of the article expressly state, "The seventh article of our confession, in which we said that the Church is the congregation of saints, they have condemned and have added a long disquisition, that the wicked are not to be separated from the Church, since John has compared the Church to a threshing-floor on which wheat and chaff are heaped together." (Ibid. P.71)

This then is the objection raised by the Romanists, that, according to Scripture, the wicked and hypocrites belong to the Church in the strict sense of the word. The answer given must meet just this objection. But the report that the Church has two sides a visible and an invisible one, would be an evasion rather than a real Scriptural refutation of the Roman objection; because the point is the relation of the wicked to the church. Besides this, we see, that the "Apology" clear-

ly points to the "Augsburg Confession" as already containing the answer. However, no one will be able to find even the slightest allusion in the "Augsburg Confession" to the thought that there are two sides to the Church, the visible and the invisible. What we find in the "Augsburg Confession," and what the "Apology" also contends against the assertion that the wicked are also a part of the Church is this: It is true, that godless people have induced an outward fellowship with the Church, so that even the means of grace, if administered by unworthy servants, are valid and effective. But this fact does not by any means prove, as the Romanists contend, that the Church cannot be a spiritual and an invisible kingdom. Mere communion with outward signs is not the essential factor, since the Church is not merely a society kept together by the fellowship of external means. The essential factor is faith and love in the hearts of men, this invisible, spiritual connection with the Savior. He who by faith is a member of Christ, is thereby a member of His body, the Church; he who lacks this faith is not a member of Christ, hence not a true member of His Church, but of Satan, even though he may be outwardly connected with the church and even have an office in it.

That this is the real meaning of the passage in question, will be readily seen, if we read it in its context. After mentioning the Roman objection that the church is compared with a threshing-floor, the "Apology" proceeds. "It is verily a true saying namely that there is no remedy against the attacks of the slanderer. Nothing can be spoken with such care that it can escape detraction. For this reason we have added the Eighth Article, lest anyone might think that we separate the wicked and hypocrites from the outward fellowship of the Church or that we deny efficacy to Sacraments administered by hypocrites or wicked men. Therefore there is no need here of a long defense against

this slander. The Eighth Article is sufficient to exculpate us. For we grant that in this life hypocrites and wicked men have been mingled with the Church and that they are members of the Church according to the outward fellowship of the signs of the Church, i. e. of Word, profession and sacraments, especially if they have not been excommunicated. Neither are the Sacraments without efficacy for the reason that they are administered by wicked men, yea, we can even be right in using the Sacraments administered by wicked men, for Paul also predicts, II Thess. 2, 4, that the Anti-Christ will sit in the temple of God, i. e. he will rule and bear office in the Church. But the Church is not only the fellowship of outward objects and rites, as other governments, but is originally a fellowship of faith and of the Holy Ghost in heart. (The Christian Church consists not alone in fellowship of outward signs, but it consists especially in inward communion of eternal blessings in the heart, as of the Holy Ghost, of faith, of the fear and love of God); which fellowship nevertheless has outward marks so that it can be recognized, namely, the pure doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments in accordance with the Gospel of Christ. (Namely, where God's Word is pure, and the Sacraments are administered in conformity with the same, there certainly is the Church, and there are Christians.) And this Church alone is called the body of Christ, which Christ renews, sanctifies and governs by His Spirit, as Paul testifies, Eph. i, 22ff." etc.

It is to be noted, that in this passage, as elsewhere, Word and Sacrament are declared to be the infallible marks of the Church ("notae ecclesiae") and not the integral parts of the Church. This is the Lutheran doctrine of the means of grace in their connection with the Church. Therefore a "Lutheran" doctrine of the means of grace as being essential parts of the Church is a mere fiction, which can not and never has been proven either by Scripture or by

the Lutheran Confessions.

Thus we have shown that not even a trace of the modern idea that the Church in its proper sense has two sides—a visible and an invisible one—can be found in the disputed quotation from the "Apology."

That the above given explanation is the true meaning of the passage is corroborated by the "Apology" itself. For in the following paragraphs this passage is further elucidated and amplified in exactly the same manner. In §13-15 it reads, "Although, therefore, hypocrites and wicked men are members of this true Church according to outward rites (titles and offices) yet when the Church is defined, it is necessary to define that which is the living body of Christ and which is in name and in fact the Church. And for this there are many reasons. For it is necessary to understand what it is that principally makes us members, and that, living members of the Church...And meanwhile He teaches that these godless men, although they have fellowship of outward signs, are nevertheless not the true kingdom of Christ; for they are members of the kingdom of the devil. Neither, indeed, are we dreaming of a Platonic state, as some wickedly charge, but we say, that this Church exists, namely the truly believing and righteous men scattered throughout the whole world....And we add the marks: the pure doctrine of the Gospel and the Sacraments," (Book of Concord, P. 72, 73)

Thus there can be no doubt that the passage so often used by Iowa in order to make their doctrine of the Church appear to be symbolical, contains in reality nothing but the old Lutheran doctrine which distinguishes between the Church as it really is and as it appears before the eyes of man and according to which the means of grace are not an essential part but infallible marks of the Church. We must bear this in mind when examining the manner in which the doctrine of the Church is dealt with in the Chicago Theses.

The Chicago Thesis reads, "The Church of Christ on earth, established and being built up by the Holy Ghost through the means of grace, is composed of all true believers, i. e. the totality of those who put their trust in the vicarious living, suffering and dying of Christ and are united with one another by nothing else than this common faith."

This thesis practically coincides with the thesis of Michigan City, which does not expressly state that the Church has a visible side, yet in the "Kirchl. Zeitschrift," XXI. pp 169-170, Dr. S. Fritschel declared that this thesis nevertheless contained the Iowan view of the Church, because in its definition the means of grace are expressly mentioned. This is also true of the Chicago thesis. But the Iowan viewpoint is brought out even more definitely by the fact that the Chicago Theses have permitted the one passage from the "Apology," which Iowa has always claimed as its "sedes doctrinae," to be inserted as the only quotation given from the symbols.

In the abstract there is really no reason, why the "notae ecclesiae" should not be mentioned in connection with the definition of the Church, because without Word or Sacrament there can be no Church. On the other hand, where these means of grace are used, there we most certainly find Christians, there is the Church; over against the Roman conception of the Church it is important to stress this fact that the Church is inseparably connected with the means of grace, as the Symbols so often do. But the Iowans arbitrarily foist a strange meaning on this reference to the means of grace, a meaning for which there is not the slightest foundation, viz. that whenever Word and Sacrament are mentioned in connection with the Church they are meant as an essential part of the Church constituting its visible side. When at a conference of Missouri, Ohio and Iowa pastors at Dubuque, Iowa, July 29 and 30,

1924, some of the Chicago Theses were discussed Dr. Reu in commentating on Thesis 14 declared, "The Church has two sides, a visible and an invisible one; in Thesis 14 the visible side of the Church is confessed." Then he also added, that as long as this Iowan conception of the Church was regarded as false doctrine, a union between Missouri and Iowa would be out of the question.

Such declarations from the Iowa side change the whole situation. They compel us either to explain the relation between the means of grace and the Church, or else to reject the false, un-Lutheran idea of a visible side of the Church in the strict sense of the term, both of which the St. Louis Theses do. The Church, in the proper sense of the word, is declared to be invisible, the means of grace are mentioned, but it is added, that they do not constitute a visible side of the Church, being "marks" of it, because

the Church can only be found, where the means of grace are in use. The modern idea of a visible side of the Church is "expressis verbis" rejected. At the same time the distinction between the Church in the strict sense of the word, i. e. the communion of saints on the one hand and the visible churches or external church communions on the other hand, which is not mentioned in the Chicago Theses, is very clearly set forth in the St. Louis Thesis of the Church.

Thus carefully weighing the distinctive features of these two different sets of theses, it is easily seen why the American Lutheran Church, while gladly accepting the Chicago Thesis of the Church, will never be ready to subscribe to the doctrine of the Church as set forth in the St. Louis Theses, as long as this church body advocates the modern idea of the visible side of the invisible Church. ..

CHAPTER V

Of The Spiritual Priesthood and Public Ministry

The doctrine of the Spiritual Priesthood of Christians forms the transition from the doctrine of the Church to the doctrine of the Public Ministry and paves the way for a right understanding of the differences which have occurred within the Church concerning the ministry.

If it be conceded, that the Church is all Christendom, the whole number of all believers and nothing else, and that all spiritual gifts and rights, which Christ has earned for the Church, are originally given to these Christians, no difficulty concerning the doctrine of the Ministry will arise. But if the Church is defined as an institution rather than a gathering of believing men, or as an external realm with a visible head on earth, the doctrine of the Ministry will at once be affected by such errors. And since there is a difference between the Synodical Conference and the American Lutheran Church in the doctrine of the Church it is but natural that

there should also be a difference in the doctrine of the Ministry.

It cannot be said, however, that this difference in the doctrine of the Ministry historically followed the departing from the symbolical doctrine of the Church. The interdependence of cause and effect was the reverse. First, there was a Romanizing tendency in the administration of affairs in the Church of the Reformation. This resulted in an effort on the part of the theologians to adapt the Lutheran doctrine of the Church to the conditions existing within the German state churches.

The peculiar Iowan conception of the Ministry, even as their doctrine of the Church, tries to keep the middle road between the genuinely Lutheran and the modern Lutheran doctrine. The Iowans have always found a certain satisfaction in terming the so-called "Uebertragungslehre" a human opinion, for which there is no foundation in Scrip-

ture, as though this doctrine was peculiar to the Missouri Synod. But aside from the fact, that this expression is quite familiar to the Lutheran dogmaticians, the Iowan attitude merely betrays a lack of insight. For the fact is that all churches always had and still have, their own "Uebertragungslehre," the Iowa Synod and the American Lutheran Church not excepted, as we shall see later.

The expression "Uebertragungslehre" signifies that "the officers of the Church publicly administer their office only by virtue of delegated powers conferred on them by the original possessors of such powers." (St. Louis Theses §30) Since no man possesses the office of the Ministry by nature, therefore it must be conferred on a person in some manner, and the question is only: In what manner and by whom is this power conferred on a person? This question is answered by each church in accordance with its own doctrine of the Keys. In the Church of Rome the pope claims that he is the only possessor of the Keys and therefore usurps the right of conferring this power on his bishops, priests etc. The Episcopalian idea is, that the Keys are given to the clergy exclusively, and therefore they cannot be conferred in any other manner except by apostolic succession, from one bishop to the other. According to the Lutheran doctrine the Keys are given to all Christians and each Christian congregation. Hence in this church the public ministry comes into existence, by the congregation conferring the public administration of the Keys on certain persons.

The all deciding question, on which the whole difference in the doctrine of the Ministry hinges, is therefore this: To whom are the Keys of the kingdom of heaven originally given? If this question is answered, the argument is settled, and one would hardly expect that within the Lutheran Church there could be a difference on this question. Still at this point we meet with the same difference which we have observed in the doctrine of

the Church. Although the controversy was originally carried on between Missouri and Iowa alone, the Ohio Synod adopted the Iowan view in the Theses of Toledo long before the American Lutheran Church was formed.

Though admitting that the Gospel and the general priesthood belong to the whole Church, hence to every individual believer, Iowa denies the fact that the Keys of the kingdom of heaven are in the same sense given to every Christian, and even though in connection with the Gospel and the general priesthood the expression "the whole Church" always means all of them, i. e. each and every one of its members, Iowa gives this expression a somewhat different meaning as often as it uses it in connection with the Keys, for then it paraphrases it "the Church in its totality" i. e. not each individual member, but only the whole congregation including the clergy. Iowa firmly insists that the Keys are not given to any individual Christian but only to congregations with their ministers.

This difference is clearly set forth in the "Unterscheidungslehren" by Dr. S. Fritschel, where the "Uebertragungslehre" of Iowa and that of Missouri are contrasted in the following words, "In reality the two Synods perfectly agree in as much as the office is according to the doctrine of the Lutheran Church originally and immediately given by the Lord to the Church, i. e. it is conferred (uebertragen) by it through the proper calling of the ministers of the Church and that in this conferring of the office (Amtsuebertragung) hearers and teachers co-operate, the Lord Himself through their service conferring the office on, or committing it to the called minister. The difference begins as soon as this conferring is specified and explained. The Missourians teach that the individual Christians in the call confer the right to preach, to administer the Sacraments, to absolve, a right, which belongs to them as spiritual priests to the one that is to fill the office in their midst; or else authorize him, who

as a spiritual priest possesses THIS RIGHT as well as they to exercise it publicly in behalf of the congregation. The public ministry is therefore nothing else but the general priesthood put into function by the divine command in behalf of the congregation. But if this were true, then the rights would pass from the spiritual priests to the holders of the office, and the members of the congregation would lose that which the holders of the office receive. But where in Holy Scripture is it said that the Lord takes away from the spiritual priests the right and power to publicly preach in His name? He has rather given the office in and with His word to the Church, although the spiritual priests must call in order that this right and this power may be exercised, still they surrender nothing of it, but are just as before, in possession of all its rights and duties and rather confer (übertragen) according to the command of the Lord a right bestowed upon the Church in its totality, not upon the individual members as such." (pp. 9. 10)

The "status controversiae" at this juncture hinges on one small point. The question is: Are the Keys given to the whole Church in the same sense in which the Gospel and the general priesthood belong to it, i. e. to all believers and every individual member of the Church, or must the expression "the whole Church" be taken in a different sense as often as it is used in connection with the office of the Keys, viz: "the Church in its totality" i. e. congregations with the clergy, but not individual Christians? The first is the Missourian, the second the Iowan view-point.

According to the first view-point a congregation of Christians confers upon some one in their midst the public administration of the Keys which belong to all of them, but which for the sake of good order according to God's will, should not be publicly administered by everyone and anyone, whenever it suits him, but only by those who are authorized by the congregation. Now it is strange indeed that anyone should im-

agine that in that procedure each Christian for his own person surrenders rights and powers given him by Christ, or that He takes them away from the Christians. The Keys are one thing, the public administration of the Keys another. Even after they have conferred the public administration of the Keys to one of them, the Christians are and remain the possessors of all the rights and powers with which Christ has endowed them and they also exercise them privately every day, and even publicly in case of necessity, i. e. when they cannot avail themselves of the service of a called minister. That as a rule, congregations and clergy co-operate in calling is in our Synod not a matter of necessity but of order and good sense.

But according to the Iowan view-point God uses the congregation merely as an instrument, the members as such having no part and no share in what they confer upon the minister. Furthermore, at this point the difference in the doctrine of the Church also comes into consideration in so far as Word and Sacrament are considered to be an essential part of the Church itself. When therefore it is said that the Keys are given to "the Church in its totality" the co-operation of congregation and clergy as representatives of Word and Sacrament is regarded as essential to make a call valid. According to this view-point a congregation of Christians without representation of the clergy would have no right to establish the office of the Keys in their midst, as it says in the Madison Theses, "A call consummated by the Church is fully valid and orderly only, 1) when the constituent parts of the Church have taken part in it in a proper manner, without violent curtailment of their right and not either by the ministry or by the body of hearers usurping it exclusively and arbitrarily." Again we read, "For a proper discharge from office as well as the installing the co-operation of the entire Church consisting of congregation and ministry is necessary." (Quel u. Dok. pp 276. 277.)

Thus having pointed out the differ-

ence, let us now examine the Symbols to learn which of the two conceptions is the original Lutheran doctrine of the Ministry. The question is: Do the Lutheran Symbols really make this distinction, that the Gospel as well as the general priesthood belong to all Christians i. e. to every individual believer, but that the Keys belong only to the "Church in its totality?" Or does the expression "the whole Church" always mean all Christians, i. e. every one of them?

In the "Smalcald Articles" we read, "In addition to this it is necessary to acknowledge that the Keys belong not to the person of one particular man, but to the Church, as many most clear and firm arguments testify. For Christ speaking concerning the Keys, Matt. 18, 19 adds: If two or three of you shall agree on earth etc. Therefore He grants the Keys principally and immediately to the Church, just as also for this reason the Church has principally the right of calling. (For just as the promise of the Gospel belongs certainly and immediately to the entire Church, so the Keys belong immediately to the Church, because the Keys are nothing else than the office whereby this promise is communicated to everyone, who desires it, just as it actually manifests that the Church has power to ordain ministers of the Church. And Christ speaks in these words: Whatsoever ye shall bind, etc., and indicated to whom he had given the keys, namely to the Church: **Where two or three are gathered together in my name.** Likewise Christ gives supreme and final jurisdiction to the Church when He says: tell it unto the Church.) ("Book of Concord, (St. L. Edit.) p. 151.) Here the Symbol positively places the office of the Keys given to the whole Church on the same level as the Gospel belonging to all Christians.

Again if only "the Church in its totality" i. e. a congregation in conjunction with the clergy, had the keys, then two Christian laymen separate from the rest of the Church, could not possibly exercise this power. But according to the Smalcald Articles the

word of Christ Matt. 19, 19 gives them this very right, for we read, "For wherever the Church is, there is the authority (command) to administer the Gospel. Therefore it is necessary for the Church to retain the authority to call, elect and ordain ministers. And this authority is a gift which in reality is given to the Church, which no human power can wrest from the Church, as Paul testifies to the Ephesians 4, 8, when he says: He ascended, He gave gifts to men. And he enumerates among the gifts specially belonging to the Church pastors and teachers and adds that such are given for the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Hence wherever there is the true Church, the right to elect and ordain ministers necessarily exists. Just as in a case of necessity even a layman absolves and becomes a minister and pastor of another; as Augustine narrates the story of two Christians in a ship, one of whom baptized the catechumen, who after Baptism then absolved the baptizer. Here belong the statements of Christ which testify that the Keys have been given to the Church, and not merely to certain persons, Matt. 18, 20; Where two or three are gathered in My name, etc. Lastly, the statement of Peter also confirms this, I Pet. 2, 9: Ye are the royal priesthood. These words pertain to the true Church, which certainly has the right to elect and ordain ministers, since it alone has the priesthood. (Book of Concord, p. 155.)

Finally, if the Keys were not given by Christ to the Christians as Christians, but only in conjunction with the clergy, no power in the world could bestow this right on the lay Christians, not even in case of necessity. But according to our Symbols this right belongs to the Christians as Christians and therefore in case of necessity, they may exercise it even without the clergy. The "Smalcald Articles" declare, "From all these things it is clear, that the Church retains the right to elect and ordain ministers. And the wickedness and the tyranny of bishops afford cause for schism and discord, therefore, if

the bishops either are heretics or will not ordain suitable persons, the churches are in duty bound before God, according to the divine law, to ordain for themselves pastors and ministers" etc. (l. c.

That this doctrine is Scriptural the Symbol proves from many clear texts. Therefore it sounds strange in the light of these symbolical statements, when Dr. Deindoerfer in comparing the Missouri doctrine with that of Iowa said of the former "This *Uebertragungslehre*, is, as far as we can see, not taken out of the Word of the Scriptures but put into it. Nor is it found in our Symbols even though the Smalcald Articles are referred to, which however, contain nothing about a conferring of the rights of the spiritual priests on the preachers or pastors and yet the Missouri Synod claims that this is the true doctrine of the Ministry in keeping with the Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions and which every Lutheran Christian must accept." (Quoted in *Lehre und Wehre* 50, p. 445)

But the passages quoted from the "Smalcald Articles" and others of similar nature definitely prove that the doctrine of the Ministry, which Iowa has so vehemently denounced as a human invention, really is, as P. Loche, frankly admitted, the old, genuinely Lutheran doctrine. The Iowan conception, on the other hand, is a precarious attempt to keep the middle road between this Lutheran doctrine and the Romanizing theories of some Lutheran theologians of the nineteenth century. Since the Ohio Synod has accepted the Iowan view in the Theses of Michigan City and of Toledo, we are justified in ascribing this doctrine to the American Lutheran Church.

An agreement with the American Lutheran Church in this doctrine ought not to be an impossibility. But it ought not to be reached by simply ignoring the difference, as is done in the Chicago Theses. In these Theses the spiritual priesthood of all Christians is correctly defined, the difference between this and the office of the Ministry is set forth; the office is characterized as a divine institution, and the right to call ministers is given to the

congregation—all of which are points in which Missouri and Iowa have agreed for a long time. But nothing is said about the question, to whom the Keys were originally given, which always was and still is a disputed point between Missouri and Iowa, resp. the American Lutheran Church.

Here again the St. Louis Theses supply the want. They do not simply cover the common ground but touch those very points which have always been in dispute and which must be settled, if we are to have a true unity. In §30 the proper conception of the general priesthood is based on the right understanding of the doctrine of the Church. "Since the Christians are the Church, it is self-evident that they alone originally possess the spiritual gifts and rights which Christ has gained for and given to, His Church. Thus St. Paul reminds all believers: All things are yours, I Cor. 3 21, 22 and Christ Himself commits to all believers the Keys of the kingdom of Heaven Matt. 16. 13-19; 18, 17-29; John 20. 22, 23, and commissions all believers to preach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments. Matt. 28. 19, 20; I Cor. ii. 23-23."

Here as in the Smalcald Articles the Keys, even as the general priesthood are regarded as belonging to the Christians as Christians, not to the "Church in its totality." Therefore the Christians are meant, when we read, "The officers of the Church publicly administer their offices only by virtue of delegated powers, conferred upon them by the original possessors of such powers, and such administration remains under the supervision of the latter, Col. 4. 17." (Ibid. No 30)

When this essential point is settled that the Christians as Christians are the original possessors of the Keys, then all the rest follows as a matter of course. No one has ever taught that in calling a minister each Christian acts independently for his own person, but wherever there are a number of Christians they are to form a congregation and in all matters pertaining to the public administration of the Keys they are to act as a unit.

CHAPTER VI

Of Church Government

While the Chicago Theses do not touch upon the subject of Church Government, the St. Louis Theses state in §32 that the ministry possesses no other power than the power of the Word of God and that it is the duty of Christians to yield unconditional obedience to the office of the ministry whenever and as long as the minister proclaims to them the Word of God.

Theoretically there is no difference between Missouri and the American Lutheran Church as far as Church Government is concerned. The plans of Loehle to gather all the faithful Lutherans in America under one common church government were frustrated by the strictly Lutheran Church polity of the Missouri Synod and even within the Iowa Synod his ideas were never realized to any great extent. Still theory and practise do not always agree. While theoretically the American Lutheran Church will probably assent to the principle laid down in the St. Louis Theses, indications are that in accordance with their doctrine of Church and Ministry the need for a stronger church government is felt in that body.

In the March number of the "Kirchliche Zeitschrift" (1934) there was published an essay on "The Great Deed of Voluntarily Subordinating Oneself within the Lutheran Piety," (Die Grosstat der freiwilligen Unterordnung innerhalb der lutherischen Frömmigkeit) an essay, which points out the need of stronger church government. In this paper we meet with the same line of argument which was employed ninety years ago, when Pastor Loehle and his adherents protested against the church polity of the Missouri Synod, warning against mob rule within the Church. The essayist does not seem to know anything of true Christian liberty but only of licentiousness, a "liberty to do nothing for the welfare of the Church" or to follow the dictates of their own foolish hearts. He flatly denies that all

Christians are kings and priests before God, claiming that only some of them are, while the rest partake of this honor merely in so far as they are members of a kingly and priestly realm, the Christian Church (p. 149 ff).

The drawbacks and abuses of the present system are mentioned, (the existence of which is not to be denied) but they exist only wherever and whenever true Lutheran principles ARE NOT CARRIED into practise, since the Word of God is NOT APPLIED in the proper manner. The only manner in which to remedy this evil is that pastors and synodical officials in such cases properly apply the Word of God. The essayist, on the other hand, sees salvation only in a strong church government, in the voluntary subordination of congregations to their pastors, of pastors to a "divinely established authority," which is to be carefully distinguished from the INVISIBLE head of the Church, Christ in His Word. This voluntary subordination is praised as the very soul of Christian faith. (p. 155f.)

The whole essay is introduced by Dr. Reu with the remark, "This synodical essay is printed by request of the president of the Central District so that the spring conferences of this district, may according to the resolution of the district be able to ventilate it. These will do well not to stick to certain precarious assertions but to have the main thoughts impressed upon their minds."

It is highly improbable that the ideas set forth in this paper will be officially accepted by the American Lutheran Church. Principles that proved to be impractical or inopportune ninety years ago would hardly be suitable under present conditions. Yet the paper is interesting as a testimony for the fact that the difference in the doctrine of the Church and the Ministry is not irrelevant as many would think. If carried out to its logical conclusion, the Iowan doctrine

of the Church and the ministry will invariably lead to Romanism, a strong church government, and a "visible head of the Church here on earth." (l. c. p. 145.)

The St. Louis Theses strongly check all hierarchical tendencies by adding that it would be the duty of Christians to DISOBEY the pastors as soon as they were to go beyond the Word of God.

CHAPTER VII

Of Election OR Predestination

Various causes have rendered a discussion on the doctrine of Election and Predestination somewhat difficult. In the first place, the differences in the doctrines of Justification and of Conversion are naturally felt in this doctrine also, and as long as the former differences are not removed, an agreement in the latter is out of the question. In the second place, the expressions "Election" and "Predestination" are given an entirely different meaning in the various synods which have taken part in the controversy. Last, but not least, the METHODS of treating and presenting this doctrine vary to such a degree that even the language of the opposite party is not always rightly understood. But as soon as there is an agreement on the question, which of the various conflicting methods is genuinely Lutheran and Symbolical, a vast amount of confusing and impeding matter is automatically removed from the discussion, so that the remaining differences are no longer insurmountable and the way is cleared for a final decision on the question when one of the different doctrines of Election really deserves to be called Lutheran and Scriptural.

But why a special method in this particular doctrine? Why not simply treat it even as we treat every other doctrine? We do indeed treat this doctrine like all the rest, taking every single part from the clear Word of God, but special care is necessary in this case for three reasons. First, of this doctrine it is especially true that it is only partly revealed, while many things, which we would like to know, remain hidden to us in this life. Secondly, there is an almost irresistible propensity in human nature to pry into those things which are not revealed in

Scripture and to speculate on the unknown and then to incorporate such speculation in that which is revealed. The result of such commingling of human speculation with the revealed cannot be but disastrous. Therefore the Formula of Concord admonishes us, "But a distinction must be observed with special care between that which is expressly revealed concerning it in God's Word, and what is not revealed. For in addition to what has been revealed in Christ concerning this, of which we have hitherto spoken, God has still kept secret and concealed much concerning this mystery, and reserved it for His wisdom and knowledge alone." Finally, in the practical application of this doctrine any inferences drawn along the lines of human reasoning are apt to lead either to carnal security or to despondency and despair.

Therefore the proper method in treating this doctrine, is simply to carefully select and arrange everything which the Word of God reveals to us concerning the eternal predestination and at the same time unrelentingly exclude from the subject whatever human reason may choose to bring up and mix into the revealed truth, no matter what it may be. This is the method of Luther and the Formula of Concord, as we shall point out, and the much disputed expressions of Luther are really nothing else but the application of this principle. It also follows that any method of treating this doctrine, which has no use for this principle, cannot be the true Lutheran and Scriptural doctrine.

It is a well known fact, that Luther frequently emphasizes the rule that predestination must never be viewed "a priori" but always "a posteriori"

Also, that in dealing with the question of our own election we must not begin at the top but at the bottom. But the exact meaning of these expressions is not generally understood.

There is, however, abundant testimony of Luther himself and of those who religiously followed in his footsteps, which does not leave us in doubt as to the proper sense in which these expressions were used. The misapprehension of these terms is in part due to the fact that these same expressions were also used in ancient and modern philosophical systems, although Kant e. g. uses the terms "a priori" and "a posteriori" in an entirely different sense from Aristotle. But the quotations which follow will show that the terms in question were not used by Luther and his followers in any philosophical or merely logical, but in a strictly Scriptural sense, and must be understood in this theological sense. The expressions "a priori" and "a posteriori" were taken from Exod. 33. 20-23 and the beginning at the bottom from Gen. 28. 12 in connection with John 1. 51. While the imagery underlying these expressions is different, the meaning which they are to convey is the same: No man can see the face of God ("a priori") in this sinful world, i. e. God himself can not be known by us in His divine essence; we can only know Him as He has revealed Himself in His word ("a posteriori"). Whoever does not seek God as revealed in Christ and His Gospel will never be able to find Him.

This is also true of our eternal predestination. There is only one way to make our calling and election sure, and that way is Christ. He is the door to heaven, yea, the ladder placed on earth and reaching into heaven, on which we are to ascend. But we must begin at the bottom and proceed step by step, and then, in due time, we shall become sure of our eternal election and finally reach our goal in heaven. But whoever tries to begin on top will break his neck. In other words, he who with his own reason speculates about the secret counsel of God, asking in the first place, whether he belongs to the number of those who are predestinated to eternal

life, will fail miserably and eventually lose his faith and his salvation altogether. This is positively not the way to reach the goal.

That this is the proper meaning of the disputed terms may be recognized from the following quotations. With reference to Exod. 33. 20-23 Luther says, "When Moses Exod. 33. was hidden in a cave or cleft of the rock and saw the back of God, as His goodness had passed by under thundering, lightning and great wind, he looked at the rear of God for His face he could not see. Thus we must know our God "a posteriori" and cleave to Christ, and not fall away from Him through offence and impatience." (Erl. 62, 166)

Again he says, "To know Christ in the other and proper way means to know that He has died for us and has taken my sins on Himself so that I hold that all my work is nothing, drop all that is mine and solely believe that Christ is given to me, that His suffering and His righteousness and all His virtue is all mine. If I know this I cannot but love Him in return, for to such a man I must be attached. Hereafter I furthermore climb on the Son to the Father and see that Christ is God and has put Himself in my death, in my sin, in my misery, and also gives me His grace. Moreover there I know His kind will and the highest love of the Father which no heart may perceive nor feel." (Erl. 12, 230)

Again Luther says, "He has laid a foundation for us on which we are to rely, Jesus Christ, and through Him climb into heaven. He alone is the door and the way to come to the Father. However, we in the devil's name want to begin building above on the roof, despising the foundation. Wherefore we also shall fall." (Erl. 60 154)

Furthermore we read, "In the dispute concerning predestination it is profitable and best to begin at the bottom,—Christ, then we shall find and hear the Father; for all that have begun at the top have broken their neck." (Erl. 60. 163)

In this connection that passage in Luther's well known preface to the Epistle to the Romans which deals with predestination is very instructive.

It reads, "In the 9th, 10th, and 11th chapter he teaches us concerning God's eternal election, whence it originally flows, who is to believe or not believe, be absolved or not absolved from sin; in order that it may be entirely taken out of our hands and put solely in God's hand that we become godly. And this is also most highly necessary, for we are so weak and uncertain that, if it depended on us, indeed no man would be saved, the devil would surely overcome all of them. But now since God is certain that His predestination can not fail nor anybody resist Him, we still have hope against sin.

"But here it is necessary to put a check on those wicked and haughty spirits, who in the first place, applying their reason, begin at the top, beforehand searching the abyss of the divine predestination and in vain troubling themselves with the question whether they are predestinated. They indeed cannot but fail, either despairing or jeopardizing themselves.

"But follow this Epistle in its order, first concern yourself with Christ and the Gospel to know your sin and His Grace, afterwards to fight with sin etc., after this, when you have come to the eighth chapter, under the cross and suffering, this will rightly teach you predestination, how comforting it is."

Referring to Luther's method Brenz writes to John Marbach: "I also hold that we must think of the election "a posteriori" and not "a priori," so that we may strengthen our faith by it and not weaken or even quench it." (Lat. in Harms. Sammlungen, VII. p. 62)

How perfectly he had understood Luther and how carefully he followed him is seen from a sermon, quoted in part by Harms. In this sermon Brenz says, "In the first place, it is strictly forbidden to us, to begin by trying to find ourselves in the eternal election of the Father; for even if we would for a long time try without means to find ourselves in the abyss of the eternal election of the Father, we would not be able to find ourselves in it; man is too far separated and withdrawn from God, that he could not take hold of himself

in God. (Der Mensch is zu weit von Gott abgeschieden und getreten, denn dass er sich moechte bloss in Gott ergreifen.) But we must begin by trying to find ourselves first of all in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God; for He Himself says, I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and at another place; I am the way.

"Furthermore Christ, as He Himself explains John 1, is prefigured by the ladder of Jacob, which he saw in a dream standing on earth and reaching into heaven. By all this is shown that no man can come to God unless he climbs to heaven on Christ as on a ladder. If we find ourselves through faith in Christ we shall find ourselves in the divine predestination also....

"Thus we must, if we are to ascend to Him, ascend from the bottom to the top. Whoever is on the ground floor of a house, if he desires to go upstairs in the proper way, does not do it by jumping or flying, but he must climb up the stairway step by step. Now God has revealed His predestination in this order as described John 6. All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." (Harms VI p. 127)

Exactly the same expressions are used and the same trend of thought is followed by Simon Musaeus, Wolfgang Maphrasius and other renowned theologians of the sixteenth century, and all the quotations cited leave no doubt as to the proper meaning of Luther's expressions. To think of predestination "a priori," or "to begin at the top," means nothing else but to follow one's own reason, searching the hidden counsel of God and to ask in the first place whether we belong to the number of those who were in eternity predestinated to life everlasting. This method is under all circumstances disastrous and to be condemned. On the other hand, to think of predestination "a posteriori," or "to begin at the bottom," means nothing else, but to seek and find our election in the revealed Word, step by step strictly following the "ordo salutis," beginning with our own sins, the grace of God which in Christ is prepared for

all and in the means of grace offered to all etc., and ending with the certainty of our own personal election, which guarantees to us faithfulness to the end and the final salvation. This is the only method which affords full comfort to weary souls and at the same time prevents any misuse and presumption.

Turning to Article XI of the Formula of Concord it is highly interesting to note what great pains the authors took in applying these principles set forth by Luther. Nic. Selnecker, one of the composers of this confession gives in his commentary to II Corinthians a detailed statement of the doctrine of Predestination. After remarking that this doctrine must not be contemplated "a priori," beginning with the secret counsel of God, but "a posteriori," according to the revealed Word, he enumerates as an illustration of this principle the much discussed eight points of the eleventh article of the Formula of Concord, which proves that these eight points are meant as steps of that ladder on which we are to ascend to the certainty of our eternal election. Looking at the eight points in this light the whole eleventh article of the Formula of Concord is easily understood as an elaborate presentation of Luther's manner in treating the doctrine of Predestination.

The leading thoughts are the following: There is indeed an eternal election of those who obtain final salvation. This election or predestination, which must not be confounded with the mere foreknowledge of God, is a cause of salvation and of everything that belongs to our salvation, so that those, who were from eternity predestinated to eternal life, will unfailingly reach the goal. This predestination, however, must not be considered "a priori" but only "a posteriori," in other words, we must not begin at the top, speculating on the secret counsel of God, but at the bottom which is Christ as revealed to us in His Gospel. He is the only way, even the ladder which reaches into heaven the various steps of which are set forth in the eight points.

The following paragraphs give more detailed explanations, the Scriptural proofs, the practical applications of the principal thoughts, the necessary safeguards against possible misunderstanding or misuse, the rich consolation, and the strong incentives for sanctification which this doctrine contains. But time and again in their course of argumentation, the authors stress the importance of remembering that this doctrine is revealed only in part and that it is not for us to fill out the gaps by trying to harmonize that which seems incompatible with our reason.

Now how meaningless would all this minuteness, how superfluous would the whole apparatus of this Art. XI be, if predestination were simply the decree of God to lead to eternal life all those that believe to the end. This is the so-called "predestination intuitu fidei," which to a great extent took the place of the Symbolical doctrine especially in the seventeenth century. The eternal decree, according to this conception, does not include the whole order of salvation as in Luther's doctrine and that of the Formula of Concord, but only the last part, the final glorification.

It is true, this predestination in view of faith is a very simple formula, but it is also as meaningless and useless as it is simple, as long as we keep in mind that it is God alone who creates and keeps faith in the hearts of men. It then amounts to the stale truism: God has predestinated to eternal life all those in whom He knew He would create and keep the saving faith.

But as soon as the idea, that the conversion of a sinner is in some manner dependent on the conduct of natural man over against the grace of the Holy Spirit, lurks in the background, as soon as the false opinion of a twofold resistance is introduced, then the formula immediately means an election in view of the different conduct on the part of natural man.

Thus the Joint Synod Record of the Wisconsin District of the former Ohio Synod of 1920 says, "God has been merciful toward all men and will have all men to be saved. How does it

happen that there is an election? Through man, because grace cannot perform its work in all men. The fact that in spite of the equally earnest calling some are not saved is due to their wilful resistance. A natural resistance is found in all men, but God overcomes it. If, however, a man, besides this, resists wilfully, stubbornly, obstinately, the grace of God cannot accomplish anything in Him; for it does not force him."

This in a nutshell is the doctrine of the Ohio wing of the American Lutheran Church, a mere legal action, dependent in the last analysis on the conduct of natural man which God has foreseen from eternity. This predestination in view of faith, or rather, in view of the conduct of natural men has no similarity at all with the doctrine of the Formula of Concord.

In the Chicago Theses it is stated that the predestination "intuitu fidei" is not the doctrine of the Confessions and the Scripture. But this verdict was not accepted by the representatives of the Ohio Synod who in a "Separate Declaration" renewed their confession to the Predestination "intuitu fidei."

The Iowan conception of Predestination differs somewhat from the Ohioan in so far as the "intuitu fidei" theory, which was defended by them in former years was dropped and predestination defined as the universal gracious will of God as far as it is realized in them that are saved. The "intuitu fidei" is still discernible in the following definition by Dr. S. Fritschel. "The Iowan Synod also teaches the particularism of predestination, but maintains with the Confessions that it is nevertheless the same gracious will as the universal. According to the latter, God will have all men to be saved, yet not unconditionally but in the order of faith. Now, since He knows from eternity how many there are that permit themselves to be saved within this order, the universal will to save all believers becomes the will to save just this certain number. The universal will thus becomes particular without suffering any alteration, but simply by passing under the aspect of the divine foreknowledge."

(Unterscheidungslehren p. 64.) This is also an eternal election in view of the different conduct of natural man.

Dr. Geo. Fritschel widened this conception by defining predestination as the universal will of God as far as it is realized, even though it be temporary only in those that believe for a time. According to this conception those that believe only for a certain time are also elect as long as they believe and cease to be elect as soon as they lose their faith. Nor must they be mentioned in the doctrine of Election in any manner in as far as they are afterwards unbelievers.

In the "Kirchl. Zeitschrift," Vol. 30, (1906) Dr. Geo. Fritschel wrote an article on the question, "Are there, according to the Lutheran doctrine, elect which will not be finally saved?" In defense of his answer in the affirmative he quotes the following passages of the Formula of Concord. "Thus many receive the Word with joy, but afterwards fall away again. Luke 8. But the cause is not as though God were unwilling to grant grace for perseverance to those in whom He has begun the good work that is contrary to St. Paul Phil. 1., but the cause is that they wilfully turn away from the holy commandment, grieve and embitter the Holy Ghost, implicate themselves again in the filth of the world and garnish the habitation of their heart for the devil. With them the last state is worse than the first, 2 Pet. 2; Luke 11; Heb. 10," and, "God knows which of the converted will persevere and which will not persevere, which will return after a fall and which will fall into obduracy." From these and similar quotations from theologians of the 16th century he tries to prove, by substituting the word "elect" for "converted," that according to Lutheran doctrine people that were elect may lose their faith definitely and be eternally lost.

It is evidently this faulty conception of predestination which prevented Dr. Fritschel from recognizing Luther's manner of dealing with this doctrine in the true light. Having settled in his mind the preconceived idea that pre-

destination is nothing but the universal gracious will of God as far as it is realized, it is only natural for him to adapt Luther's expressions to this idea. And yet, since Luther's doctrine is not that of Iowa, this could not be done without materially altering some of these expressions.

We have noted that Luther earnestly warns against treating predestination "a priori" or **beginning at the top**. He relentlessly condemns this speculation above the revealed Word of God on the secret counsel of God and declares that the only proper manner of treating this doctrine is "a posteriori" or **beginning at the bottom**, because only this way is Scriptural. But in Dr. Fritschel's system these expressions at once gain an entirely different meaning; he regards them only as referring to the universal grace of God considered from two different view-points, that of God ("from above"), that of man ("from below").

He explains, "If you are thinking 'from above' you are placing yourself with your thoughts in the time before the creation of the world and are reflecting on that which God would do in the future, whereby we may easily arrive at what the Formula of Concord §9-11 explains. If you are thinking 'from below' you are from the view-point of a pious and believing child of God, considering whence the present and future salvation, according to the Word of God is come upon you, resp. will come (i. e. as the realization of an eternal counsel of grace) and all features given in §12 are found so that this is a most comforting doctrine." (Quell. u. Dok. p. 355.) Again, "In predestination the will of God is viewed 'from below,' in the universal gracious will 'from above.'" (l. c.)

Whatever this may be, it is not the method of Luther. Does Dr. Fritschel mean to say that in the universal grace we speculate without the revealed Word about the will of God? This is what the expression "beginning at the top" means in Luther's phraseology. However the whole procedure, contemplating the realization of God's universal grace in our conversion etc. from two different

view-points,—though it can never be admitted that it is the Lutheran doctrine of Predestination—might pass as an entirely inoffensive or even edifying spiritual exercise, if it were not for the fact that those who want to apply this method to the Lutheran doctrine of Predestination, defend to the utmost. in the doctrine of Conversion, the idea of two different kinds of resistance of natural man against the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit. Adding this feature in Dr. Fritschel's doctrine of Predestination you have the realization of the grace of God in those in which the natural resistance only is found, while in those which proceed to that mysterious, inexplicable wickedness, called wilful resistance, the grace cannot be and is not realized. The chief mystery in this doctrine of Predestination is again a psychological one.

Since in the Ohio wing of the American Lutheran Church election in view of faith is held to be the true Lutheran doctrine, while in the Iowa wing the whole way of salvation is included so that predestination is defined as the universal grace of God as far as it is realized, it cannot be said that this church body has a uniform doctrine of Predestination. However, it is but fair to admit that this difference actually is of no great consequence; for all practical purposes these two conceptions, as shown before, amount to the same, an election in view of the different conduct of natural man. The American Lutheran Church is only consistent in not considering this difference as divisive.

These considerations were all necessary in order to see the differences between the Chicago Theses and the St. Louis Theses in the presentation of this doctrine.

In the Chicago Theses the doctrine of Election is preceded by four theses under the heading, "Universal Will of Grace." But reading these theses we find that the universal gracious will of God is only slightly touched upon, while other truths are urged which are of great importance in connection with the doctrine of Predestination e. g. that God does all things according to an

eternal counsel and purpose etc. But why summarize these truths under the misleading title, "The Universal Gracious Will?" There is no denying the fact that by this preparatory declaration the way is paved for the Iowan conception of predestination as the eternal universal gracious will of God in its realization.

The presentation of the doctrine of Predestination itself begins with a preamble which is a quotation from Dr. Stoekhardt's Commentary on Ephesians. This passage recommended itself as an introduction because, on the one hand, hardly anyone in our circles would object to it, on the other hand, the wording to a certain extent resembles Dr. Fritschel's manner of representing the doctrine of Predestination, although it is a well known fact, that Dr. Stoekhardt in this commentary as well as in all his other writings strongly taught and defended just that doctrine of Predestination which was always branded as Calvinistic by our opponents in general and by Dr. Fritschel in particular.

After this twofold precaution there is nothing in the way to understand the whole article with all its details as endorsing the newer Iowan doctrine, although it is at the same time possible to take every word in our own sense. Mysteries in this doctrine are mentioned in §8 but not specified, they may be of a psychological nature as far as the theses are concerned; in fact §3 of the Antitheses strongly suggests the old sophism: "If the mystery does not lie in the will of God, it must lie in man, where else could it lie?"

It is true, on the surface, there hardly seems to be any difference between the genuinely Lutheran and the newer Iowan doctrine of Predestination, because the latter also includes the whole "ordo salutis," Gospel call, conversion, etc., viewed as the realization of the universal gracious will of God. Nor do we deny, but emphatically assert that no other than the universal gracious will of God is realized in the elect. But this view-point theory is so insidious because under the cover of Lutheran expressions it hides the un-Lutheran

idea that the universal grace of God is realized in such only as offer merely the so-called natural resistance to it, while it cannot be realized in those that proceed to that other kind of resistance. But according to the Lutheran doctrine, the gracious will of God is realized in those who are equally guilty before God and offer the same resistance to the Grace of God as others that are lost. As long as this difference remains all theses that outwardly agree in the main expressions are unionistic formulas.

This charge of duplicity is by no means invalidated by the admission in the Chicago Theses, that the doctrine of Predestination is to be kept distinct from that of the Universal Will of Grace. For even according to the Iowan view-point a distinction is to be made between these two doctrines. But according to their position the difference is merely that of looking at the universal will of grace from a different view-point.

While the Chicago Theses strongly suggest Dr. Fritschel's method of presenting predestination merely as the universal gracious will of God looked at from a certain point of view, the St. Louis Theses really follow the method of Luther and the Formula of Concord.

In the first place, predestination or election of grace is in conformity with the Formula of Concord, defined in §30 and §39 as pertaining to a certain number of men, those and those only that obtain eternal life. On the other hand the idea of a mere military muster (This one shall be saved, that one shall be damned) is rejected in §40. Moreover it is maintained that predestination is a real election of grace in as much as the grace of God in Christ is the only cause of it, and the grace of God operative in Word and Sacrament the only means by which it is carried out, so much so, that even faith, far from being a cause of election, is rather a fruit of it. At the same time Word and Sacrament are not merely considered as means to carry out in time what God has decreed in eternity, but the whole "ordo salutis" is represented in

§35 as included in the eternal act of predestination. In this manner all Calvinistic, synergistic and similar errors are cut off.

In §37-39 predestination "intui fidel" and the Calvinistic predestination to damnation are expressly rejected and the distinction between predestination and the universal gracious will of God is duly pointed out without placing the two in opposition to each other. §40 deals with the practical application of this doctrine, the personal assurance of our eternal election. Here also the real "a posteriori" conception of this doctrine, as taught by Luther, is employed and the "a priori" method rejected.

The chief mystery which is the same in the doctrine of Conversion and in the doctrine of Predestination, is dealt with extensively in the presentation of the former doctrine §15. All that was said in that connection naturally applies to the doctrine of Predestination also. In fact the quotations used in §15 (doctrine of Conversion) are taken from the eleventh article of the Formula of Concord dealing with the doctrine of Election, and it would be a mere repetition to quote them again in this connection. In addition to the statements in §35, 38 and 39 the rejection of the psychological mystery prevents any possibility of interpreting the St. Louis Theses on Predestination in the sense of the American Lutheran Church.

CHAPTER VIII

The Shorter Theses

I. THE SUNDAY QUESTION

To make a long story short, the position of the former Iowa Synod resp. of the American Lutheran Church, in the Sunday question is this: We must distinguish between the Scriptural doctrine proper and the further "theological" development of the same. The doctrine itself is found in the Symbols of our Church. It comprises the statements that the Jewish Sabbath is abolished in the New Testament, and that for the celebrating of Sunday there is no direct divine command. So far all Lutherans must agree.

But beyond these two statements a dissension arose among Lutheran theologians whether or not the celebration of one day out of seven is a divine institution. The American Lutheran Church claims that neither the affirmative nor the negative answer to this question can be proved by Scripture or the Symbols and therefore it

must be treated as a "theological" question which should not disturb the peace of the Church. The two contradicting answers must have equal rights in the Lutheran Church.

The Chicago Theses, accordingly, keep strictly within the limits demanded by the Iowan view of the Sunday question, approving in a general way Luther's explanation of the Third Commandment, terming the doctrine of some dogmaticians to be neither Scriptural nor Symbolical. Nothing is said in regard to the doctrine that there is no divine command for the observance of any one of the seven days, which doctrine even as the opposite of Gerhard and some other theologians has always been regarded by Iowa as a "theological" opinion. Thus the thesis again covers just the common ground but completely ignores the difference which still exists.

The St. Louis thesis on the Sunday Question, on the contrary, simply re-

*From here on we shall give only a short summary of the differences. This matter has been dealt with more extensively in the pamphlet "Missouri,

Iowa, and Ohio, the Old and the New Differences," North Western Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

jects the doctrine of Gerhard and "expressis verbis" mentions "the observance of at least one specific day of the seven days of the week," as "not ordained or commanded by God," adding at the same time the respective quotations from Scripture and the Symbols. This does away with the un-Lutheran distinction between the Scriptural doctrine and the "theological" development of the same

II. MILLENNIUM.

During the first period of the Iowa Synod, when all its pastors believed in a millennium, it was claimed that this doctrine was based on clear Scripture, but very soon anti-millennarians were taken up into the synod and the whole matter was treated as a "theological" or open question. Millenarians and anti-millennarians were and are granted equal rights within the Iowa Synod and the American Lutheran Church. Yet a distinction is made between the coarser and the more refined form of this error. The coarser form which holds that the thousand years will be a time of earthly glory and that all believers will be raised before the last day, is rejected as false doctrine. Accordingly this coarse chiliasm is rejected in the Chicago Theses.

But there is a more subtle form, according to which not a general resurrection but only the resurrection of a number of martyrs and the conversion of all Israel at the beginning of the thousand years is expected. This form of chiliasm may be believed and confessed in the American Lutheran Church or it may be rejected, and yet, because it is to be treated as an open question, it must not be rejected as a FALSE DOCTRINE, nor be confessed as SCRIPTURAL doctrine, for if this were done, in either case the opposite view would stand condemned as a divisive error. The confession as well as the rejection of this finer millenarianism is declared to be a "theological" opinion which must not disturb the peace of the Church. This view also finds expression in the Chicago Theses in so far as it is stated that this subtle conception of a millen-

ium must "not be preached as Scriptural doctrine," and therewith the matter is dropped. The St. Louis Theses also mention the distinction between the coarser and finer form of millenarianism, but both forms of the error are condemned as contradicting the Scriptures.

III. THE ANTICHRIST.

That modernism with its denial of justification by faith is unable to regard the most horrible features of the papacy, especially the condemning of the saving truth, in the true light, is something that ought not surprise us, and it is but natural that modernists do not understand the position of Luther and the Lutheran Church in this question.

But the marks of Antichrist are so plainly set forth in Scripture that if a Lutheran who has some knowledge of Church History does not see the prophecy fulfilled in the papacy, he must have some special interest in denying the fulfillment of II Thess. 2. in the pope. This interest usually lies in the expectation of a millennium. If a thousand years of better times are to come for the church, the appearance of Antichrist naturally must be set in the future. Thus with unfailing certainty you may count on every millenarian to assure you that despite his best intentions he cannot see the predictions concerning Antichrist fulfilled in the pope. But as the enthusiasm for a millennium cools off the view will be cleared in the same ratio for the Lutheran doctrine of the Antichrist.

Thus the vehement opposition of the former Iowa Synod to the doctrine that the pope, as taught in the Lutheran Symbols, is that great Antichrist, predicted in II Thess. 2, has considerably calmed down in the last years. But the well known position of Luther is still far from being acknowledged as strictly Scriptural by them. Those Iowan members of the American Lutheran Church who have dropped millenarian expectations will admit that there is so much of an Antichristian nature in popery that after all II Thess. 2. may be fulfilled in the

pope. But this being a historical question, since the Bible does not say that the pope is that Antichrist, there can be no certainty about it.

At a private intersynodical conference at Waverly, Iowa, Sept. 25 and 26, 1923, Dr. Geo. Fritschel gave as his personal conviction the following: "If the last day should come in the near future it would be evident that the pope is the Antichrist foretold II Thess. 2. But the world may stand much longer and in that case another enemy of Christ may arise, worse than the pope, and he would then be the true Antichrist." In other words, if the Judgment Day should come now, it would reveal the fact that the Lutheran Church always had the true Scriptural doctrine of the Antichrist, and that Iowa at all times more or less disliked and contradicted a perfectly Scriptural doctrine. If this much is to be conceded, why not correct the error now while it is time? For as to the possibility of an enemy worse than the pope arising in the Church, in that case Scriptural proof as demanded by Iowa, would still be lacking. If the perfect harmony of prophecy and fulfillment is not to be acknowledged as Scriptural but only as historical proof, then the doubters in Israel would have been perfectly justified in saying: We see that the predictions of the prophets are fulfilled in Jesus; but since the prophets do not say in so many words that this Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah, this is a historical question. Some one may come in whom the predictions are more literally fulfilled. He then, will be the true Messiah. The fact is, that, according to the Iowan view-point, a Scriptural proof for the identity of Antichrist is impossible as long as the world stands, and this fact is conclusive evidence that their attitude itself is impossible.

The Chicago thesis concerning Antichrist reflects the latter Iowan view. The statement that the pope is the Antichrist is qualified by the declaration that among all the Antichristian symptoms in the Church up to this time

there is none in whom the predictions of II Thess. 2. correspond in the same measure as in the papacy. But the possibility of a future development of the Antichristian kingdom is expressly left open, and such development might, of course, eventually alter the case.

The St. Louis Thesis, on the contrary stresses the fact that all the features of the Antichrist as drawn in the prophecies, including even the most abominable and horrible ones, are fulfilled in the pope of Rome. This leaves no room for a future development of the Antichristian kingdom, in which an enemy of Christ, worse than the pope might finally prove to be the true Antichrist.

IV. OPEN QUESTIONS

The discussion of this difference was always rendered difficult by the peculiar sense which the former Iowa Synod arbitrarily gave to the expression "Open Questions." Though in the first years they used this term in the same sense in which it was commonly used by the theologians of the nineteenth century, it was afterwards given a somewhat wider sense, a procedure which has ever since lead to untold confusion and misunderstanding.

To quote at least one passage. In 1859 the term is still defined as "a question on which no symbolical decisions have as yet been laid down in the Confessional Writings of our Church, and therefore both views must be allowed to stand side by side in the Church." (Qu. u. Dok. p 263) The first part of this definition was later dropped and open questions were defined simply as "theological" hence non-divisive opinions.

Thus the differences in the doctrines of the Church and the Ministry, of Sunday, of Chiliasm and Antichrist, were and are called open questions by them in this sense: As far as the Scriptural and Symbolical doctrine is concerned, they claim that Missouri and Iowa are in perfect agreement, while those differences which still exist, are merely "theological" opinions which ought not to hinder church fellowship; the two conflicting opinions in each of these

points should have equal rights in the Church. In the previous chapters it has been shown that such an attitude is untenable.

The Chicago Thesis on Open Questions does not shed any light at all on the matter, because the question which points may or may not be considered as open questions is itself left open. The modern idea of open questions which Iowa has dropped at a very early date is strongly condemned in §27. The term "Open Questions" is properly defined in §28. But how about those differences which Iowa has always insisted, and the American Lutheran Church to this day insists, must be treated as open questions? Are they really to be considered non-divisive opinions, or as doctrinal differences? §29 merely says. it is very difficult to decide this question, yet by faithfully studying the Scriptures in each case this question will be decided.

But it will never be decided unless it is plainly stated whether or not a certain point is rightly treated as an open question. Accordingly, the St. Louis Theses not only give a short and clear definition of the term but also add that the differences in the doctrines of the Church and Ministry, of Sunday, of Chiliasm and of Antichrist are not to be included in the number of open questions because the disputed points are clearly decided in Scripture.

V. THE SYMBOLS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Regarding our attitude towards the Confessions of our Church there is no difference in the principles laid down in the St. Louis and the Chicago Theses. They both reject the "Quatenus" and stress the "Quia." They both define the sphere covered by the confessional obligation as the totality of Scriptural doctrine contained in the Symbols, and exclude such things as are historical and purely exegetical questions, from the sphere of the obligatory matter.

But that the unity in this question is, in spite of the seemingly perfect harmony between us and our opponents, in reality a delusion is clearly seen

from all the foregoing chapters. The difference hidden in this thesis lies in the fact that the term "Scriptural doctrines" is given a narrower range in the American Lutheran Church than in the Synodical Conference.

CONCLUSION

We have thus analyzed the doctrinal differences which have not been removed between the Synodical Conference and the American Lutheran Church to this day. We have seen that all the points of difference are thoroughly covered by the St. Louis Theses, and we are not only sincerely convinced but divinely certain that these theses, as in all other points, so in the disputed questions, set forth the Scriptural and genuinely Lutheran doctrine.

Up to the present time the Scripturalness of these theses has neither been acknowledged nor questioned by the American Lutheran Church, while the "Lutheran Herald," an organ of the United Norwegian Synod, says on April 17, 1934, "We have no objection to the doctrinal position expressed by the Synodical Conference in its 'Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod.'" (C. Th. M. July, 1934, p 557) But if the American Lutheran Church is of the opinion, as Dr. Reu expresses it, that with this confession of our Synod the work of the intersynodical committee is buried, is not this conclusive evidence that the members of the American Lutheran Church, or at least their leaders, know very well that in the Chicago Theses the differences are merely veiled or evaded?

However, in order to be fair we should remember that they look at these differences from an entirely different view-point, for even though they are well aware of the fact that the differences are not at all removed, they hold that, with the exception of the main differences in the doctrine of Conversion and Predestination, these differences are merely theological opinions, open questions which should not disturb the peace of the Lutheran Church. We on the other hand regard

them as real doctrinal differences which must needs first be removed in order to bring about a real unity.

If this diagnosis is correct, then the whole question at issue between the Synodical Conference and the American Lutheran Church may be reduced to two questions:—

I. In the doctrines of Conversion and Election, is it really Lutheran and Scriptural doctrine to distinguish a twofold kind of resistance in the hearers of the Word, one that is overcome by the Holy Spirit and one which He is unable to overcome? A definite answer to this question would practically decide the controversy concerning Conversion and Predestination.

II. Are the conflicting doctrines regarding the absolute Inerrancy of the Scriptures, Sunday, Church, Ministry, Millennium, and Antichrist really theological opinions and open questions in the sense of the American Lutheran Church, or are we here confronted with serious differences which endanger the purity of doctrine and, if ignored, would rob our Lutheran Church of its glory, to be the Church of the pure Word?

If these two questions would be discussed without animosity and personal invectives from both sides, this could not help but further a better understanding and might eventually even lead to a real unity at least with some of our present opponents. But nothing is more detrimental to the best

interests of our Church than the blind cry for union regardless of those differences which have for many years separated us.

Therefore, if no true unity can be obtained, may the Lord in His mercy preserve us from that spirit of indifference and spiritual apathy, which has no comprehension of, and no appreciation for, that precious treasure which the Lord has committed to our Fathers and which we have inherited from them—the pure Scriptural doctrine, the unadulterated Word of God. Neither we nor our Fathers have deserved this priceless gift, and that in these days of modernism, indifference and unionism our Synod has been blessed with such a clear and pure confession and strong bulwark against false unions, is a benefit so wonderful and so precious that we can never thank God enough for it. These Theses deserve to be studied, searched and examined from every angle. The more this is done in private and in our conferences and conventions, the more we shall be imbued with the spirit of our Fathers and with true love and esteem of the pure doctrine.

Let this be our earnest endeavor and our highest goal, not to make a show before the world or before other churches by a pretended unity at the expense of truth and sincerity, but to be faithful to the Word of our Lord, so that we may be and always remain,
THE TRUE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

BRIEF STATEMENT
OF THE
DOCTRINAL POSITION
OF THE
MISSOURI SYNOD

Of the Holy Scriptures

1. We teach that the Holy Scriptures differ from all other books in the world in that they are the Word of God. They are the Word of God because the holy men of God who wrote the Scriptures wrote only that which the Holy Ghost communicated to them by inspiration 2 Tim. 3, 16; 2 Pet. 1, 21. We teach also that the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is not a so called "theological deduction," but that it is taught by direct statements of the Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3, 16; John 10, 35; Rom. 3, 2; 1 Cor. 2, 13. Since the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, it goes without saying that they contain no errors or contradictions, but that they are in all their parts and words the infallible truth, also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters, John 10, 35.

2. We furthermore teach regarding the Holy Scriptures that they are given by God to the Christian Church for the foundation of faith, Eph. 2, 20. Hence the Holy Scriptures are the sole source from which all doctrines proclaimed in the Christian Church must be taken and therefore, too, the sole rule and norm by which all teachers and doctrines must be examined and judged.—With the Confessions of our Church we teach also that the "rule of faith" (analogia fidei) according to which the Holy Scriptures are to be understood are the clear passages of the Scriptures themselves which set forth the individual doctrines. (Apologie. Triglotta, p. 441, §80; Mueller, p. 284.) The rule of faith is not the man-made so-called "totality of Scripture" ("Ganzes der Schrift").

3. We reject the doctrine which under the name of science has gained wide popularity in the Church of our day, that Holy Scripture is not in all its parts the Word of God, but in part the Word of God and in part the word of man and hence does, or at least might, contain error. We reject this erroneous doctrine as horrible and blasphemous, since it flatly contradicts Christ

and His Holy Apostles, sets up men as judges over the Word of God, and thus overthrows the foundation of the Christian Church and its faith.

Of God

4. On the basis of the Holy Scriptures we teach the sublime article of the Holy Trinity; that is, we teach that the one true God, Deut. 6, 4; 1 Cor. 8, 4, is the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, three distinct persons, but of one and the same divine essence, equal in power, equal in eternity, equal in majesty, because each person possesses the one divine essence entire, Col. 2, 9; Matt. 28, 19. We hold that all teachers and communions that deny the doctrine of the Holy Trinity are outside the pale of the Christian Church. The Triune God is the God who is gracious to man, John 3, 16—18; 1 Cor. 12, 3. Since the Fall no man can believe in the "fatherhood" of God except he believe in the eternal Son of God, who became man and reconciled us to God by his vicarious satisfaction, 1 John 2, 23; John 14, 6. Hence we warn against Unitarianism, which in our country has to a great extent impenetrated the sects and is being spread particularly also through the influence of the lodges.

Of Creation

5. We teach that God has created heaven and earth, and that in the manner and in the space of time recorded in the Holy Scriptures, especially Gen. 1 and 2, namely, by His almighty creative word, and in six days. We reject every doctrine which denies or limits the work of creation as taught in Scripture. In our days it is denied or limited by those who assert, ostensibly in deference to science, that the world came into existence through a process of evolution; that is, that it has, in immense periods of time, developed more or less out of itself. Since no man was present when it pleased God to create

the world, we must look, for a reliable account of creation, to God's own record, found in God's own book, the Bible. We accept God's own record with full confidence and confess with Luther's Catechism: "I believe that God has made me and all creatures."

Of Man and Of Sin

6. We teach that the first man was not brutelike nor merely capable of intellectual development, but that God created man in **His own image**, Gen. 1, 26, 27; Eph. 4, 24; Col. 3, 10, that is, in true knowledge of God and in true righteousness and holiness and endowed with a truly scientific knowledge of nature, Gen. 2, 19—23.

7. We furthermore teach that sin came into the world by the fall of the first man, as described Gen. 3. By this Fall not only he himself, but also his natural offspring have lost the original knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and thus all men are sinners already by birth, dead in sins, inclined to all evil, and subject to the wrath of God, Rom. 5, 12, 18; Eph. 2, 1—3. We teach also that men are unable, through any efforts of their own or by the aid of "culture and science," to reconcile themselves to God and thus to conquer death and damnation.

Of Redemption

8. We teach that in the fullness of time the eternal Son of God was made man by assuming, from the Virgin Mary through the operation of the Holy Ghost, a human nature like unto ours, yet without sin, and receiving it into His divine person. Jesus Christ is therefore "true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary," true God and true man in one undivided and indivisible person. The purpose of this miraculous incarnation of the Son of God was that He might become the Mediator between God and men, both fulfilling the divine Law and suffering

and dying in the place of mankind. In this manner God has reconciled the whole sinful world unto Himself, Gal. 4, 4, 5; 3, 13; 2 Cor. 5, 18, 19.

Of Faith in Christ

9. Since God has reconciled the whole world unto Himself through the vicarious life and death of His Son and has commanded that the reconciliation effected by Christ be proclaimed to men in the Gospel, to the end that they may believe it, 2 Cor. 5, 18, 19; Rom. 1, 5, therefore faith in Christ is the only way for men to obtain personal reconciliation with God, that is, forgiveness of sins, as both the Old and New Testament Scriptures testify, Acts 10, 43; John 3, 16—18, 33. "By this faith in Christ, through which men obtain the forgiveness of sins, is not meant any human effort to fulfill the law of God after the example of Christ, but faith in the Gospel, that is, in the forgiveness of sins, or justification, which was fully earned for us by Christ and is offered in the Gospel. This faith justifies, not inasmuch as it is a work of man, but inasmuch as it lays hold of the grace offered, the forgiveness of sins, Rom. 4, 16.

Of Conversion

10. We teach that conversion consists in this, that a man, having learned from the law of God that he is a lost and condemned sinner, is brought to faith in the Gospel, which offers him forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation for the sake of Christ's vicarious satisfaction, Acts 11, 21; Luke 24, 46, 47; Acts 26, 18.

11. All men, since the Fall, are dead in sins, Eph. 2, 1—3, and inclined only to evil, Gen. 6, 5; 8, 21; Rom. 8, 7. For this reason, and particularly because men regard the Gospel of Christ, crucified for the sins of the world, as foolishness, 1 Cor. 2, 14, faith in the Gospel, or conversion to God, is neither wholly nor in the least part the work of man, but the work of God's grace

and almighty power alone, Phil. 1, 29; Eph. 2, 8; 1, 19;—Jer. 31, 18. Hence Scripture calls the faith of man, or his conversion, a raising from the dead, Eph. 1, 20; Col. 2, 12, a being born of God, John 1, 12, 13, a new birth by the Gospel, 1 Pet. 1, 23—25, a work of God like the creation of light at the creation of the world, 2 Cor. 4, 6.

12. On the basis of these clear statements of the Holy Scriptures we reject every kind of **synergism**, that is, the doctrine that conversion is wrought not by the grace and power of God alone, but in part also by the cooperation of man himself, by man's right conduct, his right attitude, his right self determination, his lesser guilt or less evil conduct as compared with others, his refraining from wilful resistance, or anything else whereby man's conversion and salvation is taken out of the gracious hands of God and made to depend on what man does or leaves undone. For this refraining from wilful resistance or from any kind of resistance is also solely a work of grace, which "changes unwilling into willing men." Ezek. 36, 26; Phil. 2, 13. We reject also the doctrine that man is able to decide for conversion through "powers imparted by grace," since this doctrine presupposes that before conversion man still possesses spiritual powers by which he can make the right use of such "powers imparted by grace."

13. On the other hand we reject also the Calvinistic perversion of the doctrine of conversion, that is, the doctrine that God does not desire to convert and save all hearers of the Word, but only a portion of them. Many hearers of the Word indeed remain unconverted and are not saved, not because God does not earnestly desire their conversion and salvation, but solely because they stubbornly resist the gracious operation of the Holy Ghost, as Scripture teaches, Acts 7, 51; Matt. 23, 37; Acts 13, 46.

14. As to the question why not all men are converted and saved, seeing that God's grace is universal and all men are utterly corrupt, we confess that we

cannot answer it. From Scripture we know only this: A man owes his conversion and salvation, not to any lesser guilt or better conduct on his part, but solely to the grace of God. But any man's non-conversion is due to himself alone: it is the result of his obstinate resistance against the converting operation of the Holy Ghost, Hos. 13, 9.

15. Our refusal to go beyond what is revealed in these two Scriptural truths is not "masked Calvinism" ("Cryptocalvinism"), but precisely the Scriptural teachings of the Lutheran Church as it is presented in detail in the Formula of Concord (Triglot, p. 1081, §57—59. 60b. 62. 63. M., p. 716f.): "That one is hardened, blinded, given over to a reprobate mind, while another who is indeed in the same guilt, is converted again, etc.,—in these and similar questions Paul fixes a certain limit to us how far we should go, namely, that in one part we should recognize God's judgment. For they are well-deserved penalties of sins when God punishes a land or nation for despising His Word that the punishment extends also to their posterity, as is to be seen in the Jews. And thereby God in some lands and persons exhibits His severity to those that are His in order to indicate what we all would be worthy and worth since we act wickedly in opposition to God's Word and often grieve the Holy Ghost sorely; in order that we may live in fear of God and acknowledge and praise God's goodness, to the exclusion of, and contrary to, our merit in and with us, to whom He gives His Word and with whom He leaves it and whom He does not harden and reject.... And this His righteous, well-deserved judgment He displays in some countries, nations, and persons in order that, when we are placed alongside of them and compared with them (*quam simillimi illis deprehensi*, i. e., and found to be most similar to them), we may learn the more diligently to recognize and praise God's pure, unmerited grace in the vessels of mercy.... When we proceed thus far in this article, we remain on the right way as it is written, Hos.

13, 9: 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thy help.' However, as regards these things in this disputation which would soar too high and beyond these limits, we should with Paul place the finger upon our lips and remember and say, Rom. 9, 20: 'O man, who art thou that repliest against God?' " The Formula of Concord describes the mystery which confronts us here not as a mystery in man's heart (a "psychological" mystery), but teaches that, when we try to understand why "one is hardened, blinded, given to a reprobate mind, while another, who is indeed in the same guilt, is converted again," we enter the domain of the unsearchable judgments of God and ways past finding out, which are not revealed to us in His Word, but which we shall know in eternal life, 1 Cor. 13, 12.

16. Calvinists solve this mystery which God has not revealed in His Word, by denying the universality of grace; synergists by denying that salvation is by grace alone. Both solutions are utterly vicious, since they contradict Scripture and since every poor sinner stands in need of, and must cling to, both the unrestricted universal grace and the unrestricted "by grace alone," lest he despair and perish.

Of Justification

17. Holy Scripture sums up all its teachings regarding the love of God to the world of sinners regarding the salvation wrought by Christ, and regarding faith in Christ as the only way to obtain salvation, in the article of justification Scripture teaches that God has already declared the whole world to be righteous in Christ, Rom. 7, 19; 2 Cor. 5, 18—21; Rom. 4, 25; that therefore not for the sake of their good works, but without the works of the Law, by grace, for Christ's sake, He justifies, that is, accounts as righteous, all those who believe in Christ, that is, believe, accept, and rely on the fact that for Christ's sake their sins are forgiven. Thus the Holy Ghost testifies through St. Paul: "There is no difference; for all have

sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," Rom. 3, 23. 24. And again: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the Law," Rom. 3, 28.

18. Through this doctrine alone Christ is given the honor due Him, namely, that through His holy life and innocent suffering and death He is our Savior. And through this doctrine alone can poor sinners have the abiding comfort that God is assuredly gracious to them. We reject as apostasy from the Christian religion all doctrines whereby man's own works and merit are mingled into the article of justification before God. For the Christian religion is the faith that we have forgiveness of sins and salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, Acts 10, 43.

19. We reject as apostasy from the Christian religion not only the doctrine of the Unitarians, who promise the grace of God to men on the basis of their moral efforts; not only the gross work-doctrine of the papists, who expressly teach that good works are necessary to obtain justification; but also the doctrine of the synergists who indeed use the terminology of the Christian Church and say that man is justified "by faith," "by faith alone," but again mix human works into the article of justification by ascribing to man a cooperation with God in the kindling of faith and thus stray into papistic territory.

Of Good Works

20. Before God only those works are good which are done for the glory of God and the good of man, according to the rule of the Divine Law. Such works however, no man performs unless he first believes that God has forgiven him his sins and has given him eternal life by grace, for Christ's sake, without any works of his own, John 15, 4. 5. We reject as a great folly the assertion, frequently made in our day that works must be placed in the fore,

and "faith in dogmas"—meaning the Gospel of Christ Crucified for the sins of the world—must be relegated to the rear. Since good works never precede faith, but are always and in every instance the result of faith in the Gospel, it is evident that the only means by which we Christians can become rich in good works (and God would have us to be rich in good works, Titus 2, 14) is unceasingly to remember the grace of God which we have received in Christ, Rom. 12, 1; 2 Cor. 8, 9. Hence we reject as unchristian and foolish any attempt to produce good works by the compulsion of the Law or through carnal motives.

Of the Means of Grace

21. Although God is present and operates everywhere throughout all creation and the whole earth is therefore full of the temporal bounties and blessings of God, Col. 1, 17; Acts 17, 28; 14, 17, still we hold with Scripture that God offers and communicates to men the spiritual blessings purchased by Christ, namely, the forgiveness of sins and the treasures and gifts connected therewith, only through the external means of grace ordained by Him. These means of grace are the Word of the Gospel, in every form in which it is brought to man, and the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Word of the Gospel promises and applies the grace of God, works faith and thus regenerates man, and gives the Holy Ghost, Acts 20, 24; Rom. 10, 17; 1 Pet. 1, 23; Gal. 3, 2. Baptism, too, is applied for the remission of sins and is therefore a washing of regeneration and renewing the Holy Ghost, Acts 2, 38; 22, 16; Titus 3, 5. Likewise the object of the Lord's Supper, that is, of the ministration of the body and blood of Christ, is none other than the communication and sealing of the forgiveness of sins, as the words declare: "Given for you," and: "Shed for you for the remission of sins," Luke 22, 19, 20; Matt. 26, 28, and, "This cup is the New Testament in My blood," 1 Cor. 11, 23; Jer. 31, 31

—34 ("New Covenant")

22. Since it is only through the external means ordained by Him that God has promised to communicate the grace and salvation purchased by Christ the Christian Church must not remain at home with the means of grace entrusted to it, but go into the whole world with the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments, Matt. 28, 19, 20; Mark 16, 15. Churches at home should never forget that there is no other way of winning souls for the Church and keeping them with it than the faithful and diligent use of the divinely ordained means of grace. Whatever activities do not either directly apply the Word of God or subserve such application we condemn as "new methods," unchurchly activities, which do not build, but harm the Church.

23. We reject as a dangerous error the doctrine, which disrupted the Church of the Reformation, that the grace and the Spirit of God are communicated not through the external means ordained by Him, but by an immediate operation of grace. This erroneous doctrine bases the forgiveness of sins, or justification, upon a fictitious "infused grace," that is, upon a quality of man, and thus again establishes the work-doctrine of the papists.

Of the Church

24. We believe that there is one holy Christian Church on earth, the Head of which is Christ and which is gathered, preserved, and governed by Christ through the Gospel.

The members of the Christian Church are the Christians, that is, all those who have despaired of their own righteousness before God and believe that God forgives their sins for Christ's sake. The Christian Church in the proper sense of the term, is composed of believers only, Acts 5, 14; 26, 18; which means that no person in whom the Holy Ghost has wrought faith in the Gospel, or—which is the same thing—in the doctrine

of justification, can be divested of his membership in the Christian Church; and, on the other hand, that no person in whose heart this faith does not dwell can be invested in such membership. All unbelievers, though they be in external communion with the Church and even hold the office of teacher or any other office in the Church, are not members of the Church, but, on the contrary, dwelling places and instruments of Satan, Eph. 2, 2. This is also the teaching of our Lutheran Confessions: "It is certain, however, that the wicked are in the power of the devil and members of the kingdom of the devil, as Paul teaches Eph. 2, 2, when he says that 'the devil now worketh in the children of disobedience,' " etc. (Apology. Triglot, p. 231, §16; M., p. 154.)

25. Since it is by faith in the Gospel alone that men become members of the Christian Church, and since this faith cannot be seen by men, but is known to God alone, 1 Kings 8, 39; Acts 1, 24; 2 Tim. 2, 19, therefore the Christian Church on earth is invisible, Luke 17, 20, and will remain invisible till Judgment Day, Col. 3, 3, 4. In our day some Lutherans speak of two sides of the Church, taking the means of grace to be its "visible side". It is true, the means of grace are necessarily related to the Church, seeing that the Church is created and preserved through them. But the means of grace are not for that reason a part of the Church; for the Church in the proper sense of the word consists only of **believers**, Euh. 2, 19, 20; Acts 5, 14. Lest we abet the notion that the Christian Church in the proper sense of the term is an external institution, we shall continue to call the means of grace the "marks" of the Church. Just as wheat is to be found only where it has been sown, so the Church can be found only where the Word of God is in use.

26. We teach that this Church, which is the invisible communion of all believers, is to be found not only in those external church communions which teach the Word of God purely in every part, but also where, along with error, so much of the Word of God still re-

mains that men may be brought to the knowledge of their sins and to faith in the forgiveness of sins, which Christ has gained for all men, Mark 16, 16; Samaritans: Luke 17, 16; John 4, 25.

27. **Local Churches or Local Congregations**—Holy Scripture however, does not speak merely of the **one Church**, which embraces the believers of all places, as in Matt. 16, 18; John 10, 16, but also of churches in the plural, that is, of **local churches**, as in 1 Cor. 16, 19; 1, 2; Acts 8, 1: the churches of Asia, the church of God in Corinth, the church in Jerusalem. But this does not mean that there are **two kinds of churches**; for the local churches also, in as far as they are churches, consist solely of believers, as we see clearly from the addresses of the epistles to local churches; for example, "Unto the church which is at Corinth, to **them that are sanctified** in Christ Jesus, called to be **saints**," 1 Cor. 1, 2; Rom. 1, 7, etc. The visible society, containing hypocrites as well as believers, is called a church only in an improper sense, Matt. 13, 47—50. 24—30. 38—43.

28. **On Church Fellowship**. — Since God ordained that his Word **only**, without the admixture of human doctrine, be taught and believed in the Christian Church, 1 Pet. 4, 11; John 8, 31. 32; 1 Tim. 6, 3. 4. all Christians are required by God to discriminate between the orthodox and heterodox church bodies, Matt. 7, 15, to have church fellowship only with orthodox church bodies, and in case they have strayed into heterodox church bodies to leave them, Rom. 16, 17. We repudiate **unionism**, that is, church fellowship with the adherents of false doctrine, as disobedience to God's command, as causing divisions in the Church, Rom. 16, 17; 2 John 9, 10, and as involving the constant danger of losing the Word of God entirely, 2 Tim. 2, 17—21.

29. The orthodox character of a church is established not by its mere name nor by its outward acceptance of, and subscription to, an orthodox creed, but by the doctrine which is **actually** taught in its pulpits, in its theological seminaries, and in its publications. On the other

hand, a church does not forfeit its orthodox character through the casual intrusion of errors, provided these are combated and eventually removed by means of doctrinal discipline, Acts 20, 30; 1 Tim. 1, 3.

30. **The Original and True Possessors of All Christian Rights and Privileges**—Since the Christians are the Church, it is self-evident that they alone originally possess the spiritual gifts and rights which Christ has gained for, and given to, His Church. Thus St. Paul reminds all believers: "All things are yours," 1 Cor. 3, 21, 22, 23, and Christ Himself commits to all believers the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 16, 13—19; 18, 17—20; John 20, 22, 23, and commissions all believers to preach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments, Matt. 28, 19, 20; 1 Cor. 11, 23—25. Accordingly, we reject all doctrines by which this spiritual power or any part thereof is adjudged as originally vested in certain individuals or bodies, such as the Pope or the bishops or the order of the ministry, or the secular lords or councils, or synods, etc. The officers of the church publicly administer their offices only by virtue of delegated powers, conferred on them by the original possessors of such powers, and such administration remains under the supervision of the latter, Col. 4, 17. Naturally all Christians have also the right and duty to judge and decide matters of doctrine, not according to their own notions, of course, but according to the Word of God, 1 John 4, 1; 1 Pet. 4, 11.

Of the Public Ministry

31. By the public ministry we mean the office by which the Word of God is preached and Sacraments are administered by order and in the name of a Christian congregation. Concerning this office we teach that it is a divine ordinance; that is, the Christians of a certain locality must apply the means of grace not only privately and within the circle of their families nor merely in their common

intercourse with fellow-Christians, John 5, 39; Eph. 6, 4; Col. 3, 16, but they are also required by the divine order, to make provision that the Word of God be publicly preached in their midst, and the Sacraments according to the institution of Christ, by persons qualified for such work, whose qualifications and official functions are exactly defined in Scripture, Titus 1, 5; Acts 14, 23; 20, 28; 2 Tim. 2, 2.

32. Although the office of the ministry is a divine ordinance, it possesses no other power than the power of the Word of God, 1 Pet. 4, 11; that is to say, it is the duty of the Christians to yield unconditional obedience to the office of the ministry whenever, and as long as, the minister proclaims to them the Word of God, Heb. 13, 17; Luke 10, 16. If, however, the minister, in his teachings and injunctions, were to go beyond the Word of God, it would be the duty of Christians not to obey, but to disobey him, so as to remain faithful to Christ, Matt. 23, 8. Accordingly, we reject the false doctrine ascribing to the office of the ministry the right to demand obedience and submission in matters which Christ has not commanded.

33. Regarding ordination we teach that it is not a divine, but a commendable ecclesiastical ordinance. (Smalcald Articles. Triglot, p. 525, §70; M., p. 342.)

Of Church and State

34. Although both Church and State are ordinances of God, yet they must not be commingled. Church and State have entirely different aims. By the Church, God would save men, for which reason the Church is called the "mother" of believers, Gal. 4, 26. By the State, God would maintain external order among men, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty," 1 Tim. 2, 2. It follows that the means which Church and State employ to gain their ends are entirely different. The Church may not employ any other means than the preaching of the Word of God, John 18, 11, 36; 2 Cor. 10, 4.

The State, on the other hand, makes laws bearing on civil matters and is empowered to employ for their execution also the sword and other corporal punishments, Rom. 13, 4.

Accordingly we condemn the policy of those who would have the power of the State employed "in the interest of the Church" and who thus turn the Church into a secular dominion; as also of those who, aiming to govern the State by the Word of God seek to turn the State into a Church.

Of the Election of Grace

35. By election of grace we mean this truth, that all those who by the grace of God alone, for Christ's sake through the means of grace, are brought to faith, are justified, sanctified, and preserved in faith here in time, that all these have already from eternity been endowed by God with faith, justification, sanctification, and preservation in faith and this for the same reason namely, by grace alone, for Christ's sake, and by way of the means of grace. (That this is the doctrine of Holy Scripture is evident from Eph. 1, 3—7; 2 Thess. 2, 13, 14; Acts 13, 48; Rom. 8, 28—30; 2 Tim. 1, 9; Matt. 24, 22—24 (cp. Form. of Conc. Triglott, p. 1065, §5. 8. 23; M., p. 705).

36 Accordingly we reject as an anti-Scriptural error the doctrine that not alone the grace of God and the merit of Christ are the cause of the election of grace, but that God has, in addition, found or regarded something good in us which prompted or caused Him to elect us, this being variously designated as "good works," "right conduct," "proper self-determination," "refraining from wilful resistance," etc. Nor does Holy Scripture know of an election by foreseen faith, "in view of faith," as though the faith of the elect were to be placed before their election; but according to Scripture the faith which the elect have in time belongs to the spiritual blessings with which God has endowed them by His eternal election. For Scripture teaches, Acts 13, 48: "And as many as

were ordained unto eternal life believed." Our Lutheran Confession also testifies (Triglott, p. 1065, §8; M., p. 705): "The eternal election of God, however, not only foresees and foreknows the salvation of the elect, but is also, from the gracious will and pleasure of God in Christ Jesus, a cause which procures, works, helps and promotes our salvation and what pertains thereto; and upon this our salvation is so founded that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, Matt. 16, 18, as is written John 10 28: 'Neither shall any man pluck My sheep out of My hand; and again Act 13, 48: 'And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.' "

37. But as earnestly as we maintain that there is an election of grace, or a predestination to salvation, so decidedly do we teach, on the other hand, that there is no election of wrath, or predestination to damnation. Scripture plainly reveals the truth that the love of God for the world of lost sinners is universal that is, that it embraces all men without exception, that Christ has fully reconciled all men unto God, and that God earnestly desires to bring all men to faith, to preserve them therein, and thus save them, as Scripture testifies, 1 Tim. 2, 4: "God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." No man is lost because God has predestinated him to damnation. —Eternal election is a cause why the elect are brought to faith in time, Acts 13, 48; but election is **not** a cause why men remain unbelievers when they hear the Word of God. The reason assigned by Scripture for this sad fact is that these men judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life, putting the Word of God from them and obstinately resisting the Holy Ghost, whose earnest will it is to bring also them to repentance and faith by means of the Word, Acts 13, 46; 7, 51; Matt. 23, 37.

38. To be sure it is necessary to observe the Scriptural distinction between the election of grace and the universal will of grace. This universal, gracious will of God embraces all men; the election of grace, however, does not embrace all, but only a definite number, whom "God

hath from the beginning chosen to salvation," 2 Thess. 2, 13, the "remnant," the "seed" which "the Lord left," Rom. 9, 27—29, the "election," Rom. 11, 7; and while the universal will of grace is frustrated in the case of most men, Matt. 22, 14; Luke 7, 30, the election of grace attains its end with all whom it embraces, Rom. 8, 28—30. Scripture, however, while distinguishing between the universal will of grace and the election of grace does not place the two in opposition to each other. On the contrary, it teaches that the grace dealing with those who are lost is altogether earnest and fully efficacious for conversion. Blind reason indeed declares these two truths to be contradictory; but we impose silence on our reason. The seeming disharmony will disappear in the light of heaven, 1 Cor. 13, 12.

39. Furthermore, by election of grace, Scripture does not mean that one part of God's counsel of salvation according to which He will receive into heaven those who persevere in faith unto the end, but, on the contrary, Scripture means this, that God, before the foundation of the world, from pure grace, because of the redemption of Christ, has chosen for his own a definite number of persons out of the corrupt mass and has determined to bring them, through Word and Sacrament, to faith and salvation.

40. Christians can and should be assured of their eternal election. This is evident from the fact that Scripture addresses them as the chosen ones and comforts them with their election Eph. 1, 4; 2 Thess. 2, 13. This assurance of one's personal election however, springs only from faith in the Gospel, from the assurance that God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; on the contrary, through the life, suffering, and death of His Son He fully reconciled the whole world of sinners unto Himself. Faith in this truth leaves no room for the fear that God might still harbor thoughts of wrath and damnation

concerning us. Scripture inculcates that in Rom. 8, 32, 33: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Luther's pastoral advice is therefore in accord with the Scripture: "Gaze upon the wounds of Christ and the blood shed for you; there predestination will shine forth." (St. Louis Ed., II, 181; on Gen. 26, 9.) That the Christian obtains the personal assurance of his eternal election—Lutheran Confessions (Formula of Concord. Triglot, p. 1071, §26; M., p. 709): "Of this we should not judge according to our reason nor according to the law or from any external appearance Neither should we attempt to investigate the secret, concealed abyss of divine predestination, but should give heed to the revealed will of God. For He has made known to us the mystery of His will and made it manifest through Christ that it might be preached, Eph. 1, 9ff., 2 Tim. 1, 9ff."—In order to insure the proper method of viewing eternal election and the Christian's assurance of it, the Lutheran Confessions set forth at length the principle that election is not to be considered "in a bare manner (nude), as though God only held a muster, thus: This one shall be saved, that one shall be damned?" (Formula of Concord. Triglot, p. 1065, § 9; M., p. 706); but "the Scriptures teach this doctrine in no other way than to direct us thereby to the Word, Eph. 1, 13; 1 Cor. 1, 7; exhort to repentance 2 Tim 13, 16. urge to godliness, Eph. 1, 14; John 15, 3; strengthen faith and assure us of our salvation Eph. 1, 13; John 10, 27f.; 2 Thess. 2, 13f." (Formula of Concord. Triglot, p. 1967, §12; M., p. 707).—To sum up, just as God in time draws the Christians unto Himself through the Gospel, so He has already in His eternal election endowed them with "sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth," 2 Thess. 2, 13. Therefore: If, by the grace of God, you believe in the Gospel of the forgiveness of your sins for Christ's sake, you are to be certain

that you also belong to the number of God's elect even as Scripture 2 Thess. 2, 13, addresses the believing Thessalonians as the chosen of God and gives thanks to God for their election.

Of Sunday

41. We teach that in the New Testament God has abrogated the Sabbath and all the holy days prescribed for the Church of the Old Covenant, so that neither "the keeping of the Sabbath nor of any other day" nor the observance of at least one specific day of the seven days of the week ordained or commanded by God, Col. 2, 16; Rom. 14, 5 (Augsburg Confession. Triglot, p. 91, §51—60; M., p. 66).

The observance of Sunday and other church festivals is an ordinance of the Church, made by virtue of Christian liberty. (Augsburg Confession; Triglot, p. 91, §51—53, 60; M., p. 66. Large Catechism; Triglot, p. 603, §83, 85, 89; M., p. 401) Hence Christians should not regard such ordinances as ordained by God and binding upon the conscience, Col. 2, 16; Gal. 4, 10. However, for the sake of Christian love and peace they should willingly observe them, Rom. 14, 13; 1 Cor. 14, 40. (Augsburg Confession. Triglot, p. 91, §53—56; M., p. 67.)

Of the Millennium

42. With the Augsburg Confession (Art XVII) we reject every type of Millennialism, or Chiliasm, the opinions that Christ will return visibly to this earth a thousand years before the end of the world and establish a dominion of the church over the world; or that before the end of the world the Church is to enjoy a season of special prosperity or that before the general resurrection on Judgement Day a number of departed Christians or martyrs are to be raised again to reign in glory in this world; or that before the end of the world a universal conversion of the Jewish nation (of Israel according to the flesh) will

take place.

Over against this, Scripture clearly teaches, and we teach accordingly, that the kingdom of Christ on earth will remain under the cross until the end of the world, Acts 14, 22; John 16, 33; 18, 36; Luke 9, 23; 14, 27; 17, 20—37; 2 Tim 4, 18; Heb. 12, 28; Luke 18, 8; that the second visible coming of the Lord will be His final advent, His coming to judge the quick and the dead, Matt. 24, 29, 30; 25, 31; 2 Tim 4, 1; 2 Thess. 2, 8; Heb. 9, 26—28; that there will be but one resurrection of the dead, John 5, 28; 6, 39, 40; that the time of the Last Day is, and will remain, unknown, Matt. 24, 42; 25, 13; Mark 13, 32, 37; Acts 1, 7, which would not be the case if the Last Day were to come a thousand years after the beginning of a millennium; and that there will be no general conversion, a conversion en masse, of the Jewish nation, Rom. 11, 7; 2 Cor. 3, 14; Rom. 11, 25; 1 Thess. 2, 16.

According to these clear passages or Scripture we reject the whole of Millennialism, since it not only contradicts Scripture, but also engenders a false conception of the kingdom of Christ, turns the hope of Christians upon earthly goals, 1 Cor. 15, 19; Col. 3, 2, and leads them to look upon the Bible as an obscure book.

Of the Antichrist

43. As to the Antichrist we teach that the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures concerning the Antichrist, 2 Thess. 2, 3—12; 1 John 2, 18, have been fulfilled in the Pope of Rome and his dominion. All the features of the Antichrist as drawn in these prophecies, including the most abominable and horrible ones, for example, that the Antichrist "as God sitteth in the temple of God," 2 Thess. 2, 4; that he anathematizes the very heart of the Gospel of Christ, that is, the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins by grace alone, for Christ's sake alone, through faith alone, without any merit or worthiness in man (Rom. 3, 20—28; Gal. 2, 16); that he recognizes only those as members of the Christian Church who

bow to his authority; and that, like a deluge, he had inundated the whole Church with his antichristian doctrines till God revealed him through the Reformation,—these very features are the outstanding characteristics of the Papacy (Cf. Smalcald Articles. Triglot, p. 515, §39—41; p. 401, 45; M., pp. 336. 258). Hence we subscribe to the statement of our Confessions that the Pope is “the very Antichrist.” (Smalcald Articles. Triglot, p. 475, §10; M., p. 308).

Of Open Questions

44. Those questions in the domain of Christian doctrine may be termed open questions which Scripture answers either not at all or not clearly. Since neither an individual nor the Church as a whole is permitted to develop or augment the Christian doctrine, but are rather ordered and commanded by God to continue in the doctrine of the apostles, 2 Thess. 2, 15; Acts 2, 42, open questions must remain open questions.—Not to be included in the number of open questions are the following: the doctrine of the Church and the Ministry, of Sunday, of Chiliasm, and of Antichrist, these doctrines being clearly defined in Scripture.

Of the Symbols of the Lutheran Church

45. We accept as our confessions all the symbols contained in the Book of Concord of the Year 1580.—The symbols

of the Lutheran Church are not a rule of faith beyond, and supplementary to Scripture, but a confession of the doctrines of Scripture over against those who deny these doctrines.

46. Since the Christian Church cannot make doctrines, but can and should simply profess the doctrine revealed in Holy Scripture, the doctrinal decisions of the symbols are binding upon the conscience not because our Church has made them nor because they are the outcome of doctrinal controversies, but only because they are the doctrinal decisions of Holy Scripture itself.

47. Those desiring to be admitted into the public ministry of the Lutheran Church pledge themselves to teach according to the symbols not “in so far as” but “because,” the symbols agree with Scripture. He who is unable to accept as Scriptural the doctrines set forth in the Lutheran symbols and their rejection of the corresponding errors must not be admitted into the ministry of the Lutheran Church.

48. The confessional obligation covers all doctrines, not only those that are treated *ex professo*, but also those that are merely introduced in support of other doctrines.

The obligation does not extend to historical statements, “purely exegetical questions,” and other matters not belonging to the doctrinal content of the symbols. All doctrines of the symbols are based on clear statements of Scripture.